

**“Godless sermons?” A homiletical analysis and assessment of
South Korean Presbyterian preaching**

by

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DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of God being missing in South Korean Presbyterian preaching is the main research problem of this study. The researcher purposely states that this phenomenon is a “godless sermon”. One of the aims of the research is to analyze the sermons of the South Korean Presbyterian Church by using the Heidelberg method of sermons analysis. The final aim of this study is to discover faithful ways of preaching in the light of four essential voices of preaching: the voice of God, the voice of the biblical texts, the voice of the congregation and the voice of the preacher, and thereby attain the desired goal, which is reflected in the following South Korean Presbyterian Church’s belief: *“Praedicatio Verbi Dei est Verbum Dei”* — “The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God”.

In this sense, the hypotheses of this study are as follows: there is the phenomenon of God being missing in the sermonic situation of the South Korean Presbyterian Church. The voice of God can be manipulated by means of exemplary, legalistic and moralistic messages. The pneumatological approach should successfully deal with the problem of godless sermons.

According to the aims and hypotheses of the study, the researcher selected four sermons from over forty sermons from the recent Easter Sunday morning worship service in the South Korean Presbyterian Church.

In chapter two, the researcher examined the linguistic signs of the four selected sermons using the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis. Consequently, the superficial structures of the sermons were identified.

In chapter three, the researcher examined the following essential homiletical questions: which God is at issue here? In what way is the biblical text included in the sermon? What kind of congregation does the sermon appeal to, and imply? How does the preacher him/herself function in the sermon? Through this process, the researcher discerned the depth structure of the four selected sermons.

In chapter four, the researcher dealt with the phenomenon of godless sermons. Firstly, the researcher discussed the following issues: what is preaching? What is a godless sermon?

There are the different types of godless sermons such as moralistic, legalistic and exemplary messages. Secondly, the researcher investigated each sermon in terms of godless sermons. As a result, the researcher proved that God is missing in some of the selected sermons.

In chapter five, the researcher comprehensively examined the problematic sermons. Thereafter, the researcher listed practical suggestions on how to overcome godless sermons in light of the four essential voices of preaching and in terms of theonomic reciprocity.

In the final chapter, the researcher summarized and concluded the research.

OPSOMMING

Die verskynsel van God wat ontbreek in Suid-Koreaanse Presbiteriaanse prediking is die belangrikste navorsingsprobleem van hierdie studie. Die navorser dui doelbewus aan dat hierdie verskynsel ‘n “godelose preek” is. Een van die doelwitte van hierdie navorsing is om die preke van die Suid-Koreaanse Presbiteriaanse Kerk te analiseer met behulp van die Heidelbergse metode van preek ontleding. Die finale doel van die studie is om getroue maniere in die lig van die vier noodsaaklike stamme van prediking te ontdek: die stem van God, die stem van die Bybelse tekste, die stem van die gemeente en die stem van die prediker en die gewenste doel te bekom, wat die Suid-Koreaanse Presbiteriaanse oortuiging is: “*Praedicatio Verbi Dei est Verbum Dei*” - “die verkondiging van die Woord van God is die Woord van God”.

In hierdie sin is die hipoteses van die studie soos volg: Daar is die verskynsel van God wat ontbreek in die preek situasie van die Suid-Koreaanse Presbiteriaanse Kerk. Die stem van God kan gemanipuleer word deur middel van voorbeeldige, wettiese en moralistiese boodskappe. Die pneumatologiese benadering moet suksesvol die probleem van godelose preke aanspreek.

Volgens die doelstellings en hipoteses van die studie het die navorser vier preke uit meer as veertig preke uit die onlangse Paas Sondag oggend eredienste in die Suid-Koreaanse Presbiteriaanse Kerk gekies.

In hoofstuk twee het die navorser die taalkundige tekens van die vier gekose preke met behulp van die Heidelbergse metode van preek ontleding ondersoek. Gevolglik is die oppervlakkige strukture van die preke identifiseer.

In hoofstuk drie het die navorser die volgende noodsaaklike homiletiese vrae ondersoek: Watter God is hier ter sprake? Op watter manier is die Bybelse teks ingesluit in die preek? Watter soort gemeente doen die preek ‘n beroep op, en word impliseer? Hoe funksioneer die prediker self in die preek? Deur hierdie proses het die navorser die dieptestruktuur van die vier gekies preke beoordeel.

In hoofstuk vier het die navorser die verskynsel van goddelose preke behandel. In die eerste plek het die navorser die volgende kwessies bespreek: Wat is prediking? Wat is 'n goddelose preek? Daar is verskillende tipes goddelose preke, soos moralistiese, wettiese en voorbeeldige boodskappe. In die tweede plek het die navorser elke preek ondersoek in terme van goddelose preke. As 'n gevolg hiervan het die navorser bewys dat God ontbreek in 'n paar van die gekose preke.

In hoofstuk vyf het die navorser omvattend die problematiese preke ondersoek. Daarna het die navorser praktiese voorstelle opgestel oor hoe om goddelose preke te oorkom in die lig van die vier noodsaaklike stemme van prediking en in terme van theonomiese wederkerigheid.

In die laaste hoofstuk het die navorser die navorsing opgesom en tot die gevolgtrekking gekom.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

During the Reformation era (between 1517 and 1572), preaching emerged as the most effective method for proclaiming the Good News, and reigned supreme up until the last millennium when it was downgraded to a secondary role behind the Mass (Brown, Northcutt & Clinard 1963:26). The Reformers' homiletical points of view can be classified as follows:

Firstly, the Reformers acknowledged that the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God, and that God truly reveals Himself in preaching. Martin Luther (1483-1546), a representative Reformer, considered the Pope to be the enemy of Christ because the Pope forbade the preaching of the Word of God in some churches.¹ For Luther, the preaching of the Word of God was the Word of God (Holland 1980:42). A Swiss reformer, Heinrich Bullinger (1505-1575), wrote the Second Helvetic Confession (1562), where he particularly pointed out that the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God. In the Scots Confession, written in 1560 by six leaders of the Protestant Reformation in Scotland, it was stated that the one of the noteworthy aspects of the true church is the true preaching of the Word of God, in which God has revealed Himself to us. In this sense, the Reformers brought a significant renewal in preaching and the pulpit regained a central place in worship² (Fasol 1989:18).

Secondly, the preaching of the Word of God consists of human words. For example, John Calvin (1509-1564) said that God wishes to be heard by the voice of the ministers who are employed by Him (Calvin & Calvin Translation 1844:61). The Second Helvetic Confession rightly insists that we hear the Word of God through the lips of sinful preachers. In other words, God Himself does not directly come and speak to us and He does not send angelic messengers from heaven. Instead, He uses the voice of humans for His purpose as well as the efforts of preachers who have been ordained by Him. Therefore, the preaching of the Word of God is not the activity of preachers alone; it is not merely a human being who is speaking,

¹ They are the enemies of Christ and the Pope who forbade the preaching of the Word of God in some churches so that indulgences could be preached in others (The Ninety-Five Theses of Martin Luther).

² Luther insisted, "The sermon must be central in worship" (Holland 1980:42).

but God is speaking through them (Reid 1967:37)³.

Thirdly, the preaching of the Word of God is not automatically the Word of God. It means that the living Word of God is not the act of preaching or the act of reading the Scriptures in the vernacular (Holland 1980:42). What then makes preaching the Word of God? The answer is that only God Himself can make the sermon the Word of God (Forde 1990:22).⁴

Calvin indicated that preaching listens to God's voice. Luther also stated that preaching follows in God's footsteps (Cilliers 2006:i). If preaching fails to follow in God's footsteps, the living God will be eliminated in the sermon. If God is eliminated on the pulpit, our sermons will no longer be the Word of God. In this respect, Luther warned against the elimination of God, calling this reality an "*annihilatio Dei*" (*elimination of God*).

1.2. Problem Statement

What is the reality of our sermonic situation? Despite the circumstance of homiletics changing and developments having taken place since the Reformation era, the Reformed Church still stands on the aforementioned Reformers' homiletical points of view. We believe that the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God. We also believe that God encounters people through preaching (Cilliers 2004:20). In other words, implicitly or explicitly, God is truly present in preaching and speaks to his people through his ordained people. Even if this was the case, we cannot help but ask the following questions: Do the congregational members really hear the living voice of the Almighty God in our sermonic situations? Does God really appear and reveal Himself on the pulpit every Sunday morning? Does it really happen in our preaching context? What the researcher wants to point out here is that there is a gap between our homiletical confession and the sermonic situation. The phenomenon of the elimination of God has persistently occurred in the sermonic situation.

3 Leslie J. Tizard, 1959, *Preaching: The Art of Communication* (New York: Oxford University Press), p. 13, cited by C.H. Reid (1967:37) in *The empty pulpit: a study in preaching as communication*. New York: Harper & Row.

4 Forde (1990:22) gives an explanation by a phrase quoted from Luther's distinction in the doctrine of God: "God clothed in the flesh is set against the naked God (*deus indutus* versus *deus nudus*) and the revealed God against the hidden God (*deus revelatus* versus *deus absconditus*). Therefore, he says, only God can deal with God".

For example, when we look back at the history of Christianity⁵, we can find the five great centuries of growth and development, which were connected with the five centuries of great preaching: the first century with the apostles, the fourth century with Chrysostom and Augustine, the thirteenth century with Francis of Assisi and Dominic, the sixteenth century with Luther and Calvin, and the nineteenth century with Spurgeon and Maclaren (Brown et al., 1963:28). On the contrary, whenever preaching has gone into decline, the church has remained stagnant. When preachers have failed to understand God's method and message, God's kingdom has been hindered. Conversely, whenever preachers have heard God's call, understood their task, and faithfully delivered His message, the Kingdom has moved forward for His glory. This historical reflection of preaching shows us that the Word of God has been affected by the faithfulness of human preachers, and vice versa.

Almost sixty years ago, Donald G. Miller (1957:7) warned: "If Protestantism ever dies with a dagger in its back, the dagger will be the Protestant sermon." He wanted to point out that when we use the Word of God incorrectly, it will be much more dangerous than we can imagine.

David Buttrick also gives a warning. He classified a brief theology of preaching into five basics. According to his classification, preaching is the "Word of God," in that it participates in God's purpose, is initiated by Christ, and is supported by the Spirit with community in the world (Buttrick 1987:456). However, he cautions that we have to be careful when we affirm that preaching is the "Word of God;" because of our carelessness, we have gone to the pulpit with overwhelming arrogance and equated our own voices with the voice of God (Buttrick 1987:456).

In recent years, homileticians have been required to pay attention to the phenomenon of God being missing in our sermons. Wilson (2010:20-22) insists on this as follows:

God is missing in many of our sermons. ... Because God is missing from many sermons, or makes only a cameo appearance, much of what God has done in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ becomes irrelevant to how many Christians view the world.

⁵ The development of Christian preaching has generally been divided into eight distinct eras: the patristic era (70-430), the dark ages (430-1095), the scholastic era (1095-1361), the reformation era (1361-1572), the post-reformation era (1572-1700), the great awakening (1700-1800), the era of progress (1800-1900), the modern era (since 1900) (Fasol 1989:16-19).

As a typical example of God being missing in our sermons, David Buttrick (1987:458) mentions: “If scripture should become the law of preaching, then preaching will no longer be the Word of God”. Cilliers (2004:74) also highlights the problem of the elimination of God on the pulpit. He maintains that legalistic sermons proclaim an unreal God and thereby eliminate Him (Cilliers 2004:81). Sidney Greidanus (1970:79, cited by Huyser 1970:207)⁶ also warns against the danger of legalistic and moralistic sermons, saying that:

Huyser is well aware of this danger. In tracing the history of exemplary preaching he himself links “exemplary” with “moralistic”: The thematic and textual preaching of the Middle Ages became more and more an ‘exemplary’-moralistic monstrosity.

Herein, we need to recap what the basis of preaching the Word of God is. Cilliers (2004:53) refreshes a basic homiletic rule: “Preaching is always about the proclamation of the reality of the present saving God, of the works of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit”. We know it well, so that our sermons should be like this. If we lose our way and fail to follow the footsteps of God, our sermons will not be the Word of God.

In conclusion, paradoxically, God’s voice can be eliminated on the pulpit, even though God is free from our fidelities. The phenomenon of God being missing on the pulpit is the main focus of this thesis. This is because God should always be described in our sermons and must never be manipulated and subordinated. In this respect, a strong motivation to do this research is to carry out a homiletical analysis and assessment of the South Korean Presbyterian Church, and thereby, help us find a way for the Word of God to be experienced as the Word of God in preaching; to let God be God in our sermons.

1.3. Aim

As mentioned in the introduction (1.1) and problem statement (1.2), due to the significance of preaching, we should be very careful when we proclaim the Word of God because we are all sinful human beings, and because we speak human words. The researcher purposely states

⁶ S. Greidanus, (1970:79) *Sola Scriptura: problems and principles in preaching historical texts*. (Toronto: Wedge Pub. Foundation), quoted from P.H.J Huyser (Huijser). 1970. “Een ‘exemplarisch’-moralistisch gedrocht.” *Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift*, L, p. 207.

that the phenomenon of God being missing on the pulpit is a “godless sermon”.

In this sense, one of the aims of the research is to analyse the sermons of the Presbyterian Church of South Korea by using the Heidelberg method⁷ of sermon analysis. Based on the homiletical analysis of the sermons, the researcher will go on to discern godless sermons in the Presbyterian Church of South Korea.

Finally, the research aims to discover faithful ways to obtain the desired goal, which is the Reformers’ belief: “*Praedicatio Verbi Dei est Verbum Dei*”— “The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God”.

1.4. Hypothesis

A revalidation of the importance of God’s voice in preaching will result in us being careful when we proclaim the Word of God from the pulpit. In this sense, the research will be guided by the following hypotheses:

- Human preachers can manipulate the Word of God, and as a result, the voice of God can be subordinated to the voice of humans in the sermonic situation of the Korean Presbyterian Church.
- God’s voice can be manipulated by exemplary, legalistic and moralistic preaching.
- The pneumatological approach will successfully deal with the phenomenon of godless sermons on the pulpit.

⁷ Cilliers (2006:8ff) introduces the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis as follows:

Rudolf Bohren and the German author, Gerd Debus, at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, developed this analytical method. This method gained international recognition at a symposium on preaching research that was held from 8 to 12 September 1986 in Heidelberg. It is a method that grew from sensitivity to the history of preaching, but also a passion to move closer to the practice of preaching, and as such it represents an integrated practical theology in its own right. It wants to contribute to the theological and empirical evaluation of preaching and to be used to supplement methods that place a greater emphasis on an investigation into the communicative working of preaching (2006:8). It seeks to reveal the explicit and implicit signs of language in sermons. Furthermore, it will not only simply look at what is said but also accurately examine what is not said, what the preachers exclude (2006:11).

1.5. Methodology

The researcher will carry out the proposed research by adopting the approach of Dingemans (1996:92-93), which is a basic approach for practical theological arguments. The practical-theological framework of Dingemans consists of the following four phases: “the descriptive phase,” “the explanation phase,” “the normative phase” and “making suggestions”. Following this approach, the researcher intentionally categorizes these four phases into two frameworks.

The first framework covers the first two phases of the research. Here, a sample of sermons will be selected, notably from within the Presbyterian Church of South Korea. The samples will be limited to sermons preached on the previous Easter Sunday and will be collected from four well-known megachurches in general. There are a number of reasons for limiting the research to the last Easter sermon. The first reason is because they all preached on the same topic: ‘The resurrection of Jesus Christ’. This should provide a meaningful and useful comparison because the same topic was preached at the same time and under the same social circumstances. A second reason is that the event of Jesus Christ’s resurrection is central to the proclamation of the reality and works of the present saving Trinitarian God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It means that there is no space for moralistic and legalistic preaching in Jesus Christ’s resurrection. Hereafter, the researcher seeks to analyse and examine the selected sermons using the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis⁸, which is very theological and based on dialectic. The aim of this process is to identify godless sermons in the Korean sermon situation.

The second framework covers the last two phases of the research. After the homiletical examination of the sample survey, the normative and strategic phase will follow. Herein, the researcher proceeds with suggestions about the four core elements of preaching, namely: God’s voice, the biblical text’s voice, the congregation’s voice, and the preacher’s voice, which serve as a guideline to preach the Word of God as the Word of God. Furthermore, the research will reveal the importance of the working of the Spirit. The researcher has already indicated that only God can make the sermon the Word of God. In this sense, only the Spirit can link and integrate the four core voices of preaching to become God’s voice (Cilliers

⁸ The methodology which the researcher used is that of phenomenology and then he goes on to use a following specific method: the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis.

2004:28).

1.6 Outlines of chapters

This study comprises the following chapters:

Chapter 1 will orientate the reader to the research and serve as an introductory chapter.

Chapter 2 will introduce the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis and analyse the ‘superficial structure’ of the four selected sermons.

Chapter 3 will evaluate and discern the ‘depth structure’ of the four selected sermons.

Chapter 4 will deal with the main aspects of godless sermons and consider the normative role of preaching by reflecting on the four core voices of preaching, specifically: the voice of God, the voice of the biblical text, the voice of the congregation, and the voice of the preacher.

Chapter 5 will suggest a faithful way to guide us as we preach the Word of God, as the Word of God.

Lastly, **chapter 6** will summarize and conclude the research.

CHAPTER 2:

SELECTING SERMONS FROM THE KOREAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

2.1. Introduction

In the initial stages of this research, the following decisions needed to be made regarding a homiletical analysis and assessment of preaching in the South Korean Presbyterian Church: The first decision was to decide on how to go about selecting a sample of sermons to be analyzed. It is, practically speaking, not easy to do a complete enumeration survey. However, it is required to choose a sermon that will be a representative sample, even though the selected sermons do not fully represent all South Korean Presbyterian sermons. In this regard, the researcher chose sermons that were considered to be representative. The second decision was how to analyze the selected sermons. This concerns the methodology used for the sermon analysis.

In the following sections, the researcher introduces the criteria used to select the sermons and the method of analysis. After describing these two important decisions, the researcher will go ahead and analyze the selected sermons.

2.2. Selecting sermons from the South Korean Presbyterian Church

As mentioned above, a few sermons are required for this research to be possible. In the initial stages, the researcher randomly listened to over fifty sermons. Thereafter, he focused on sermons from the recent Easter Sunday morning worship service. In doing so, he listened to over forty sermons from the South Korean Presbyterian Church, and from these, he selected four sermons.

However, before discussing the criteria used to select these, it is noteworthy to mention here that for the purpose of this study, the names of the preachers and churches will remain anonymous for the following reasons: The first reason is the lack of understanding regarding the congregational situation. It is not easy to fully understand the unique situation of each church community, because the researcher is an outsider. This limited understanding can lead

to errors in the analysis. The second reason is that each selected sermon is one of their many sermons. Therefore, people are also able to formulate an incorrect perception of their other sermons. In other words, we can make hasty judgments based on the research results. However, we cannot judge all of a preacher's sermons after listening to only one of their sermons. In the long run, these two reasons show that there is no benefit to be gained by disclosing the names of the preachers and churches.

Furthermore, to select forty churches, a number of denominations and regions were considered. Nowadays, the South Korean Presbyterian Church consists of many denominations, but in general it can be classified into five large denominations, these are as follows: Hap-Dong (The General Assembly of Presbyterian Church in Korea), Tong-Hap (The Presbyterian Church of Korea), Ko-Sin (The Presbyterian Church in Korea: Kosin), Dae-Shin (The General Assembly of Presbyterian Church of Korea Daeshin), and Ki-Jang (The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea). The forty selected churches were not concentrated in one denomination, and were not to include more than ten churches in one denomination. The minimum number of church members in the selected churches was to exceed one thousand. Furthermore, they were also well-known churches among each denomination in general. The reason for considering the region is that most of the megachurches are located around the capital. This is why the researcher intentionally investigated large churches in the province of South Korea to be included in the forty churches. Consequently, the forty selected churches were thus representative of the South Korean Presbyterian Church across the country as a whole.

It was not an easy task to select four sermons out of a total of forty. Therefore, the four selected sermons were chosen based on the following criteria: The Scripture of the sermon, the denomination of the church, and the number of church members. For convenience, the selected churches will be referred to as Church A, B, C and D, and the selected sermons⁹ will be called sermon A, B, C and D, respectively.

The first criterion, as indicated above, is the Scripture of the sermon. Matthew 28:1-10 were preached in churches A, B and C; whereas Luke 24:1-12 was preached in church D. Matthew

⁹ The complete sermons are attached in the appendices. The sermons have been numbered in the left column for easy referencing.

28:1-10 and Luke 24:1-12 are about the first day after the Sabbath after Jesus died. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to tomb and there they met an angel of the Lord and the resurrected Jesus. Therefore, Matthew 28:1-10 and Luke 24:1-12 can be considered parallel phrases, even though different words are used. In fact, most preachers quote parallel phrases from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John for a better understanding.

What is the reason for choosing this Scripture? The story of the women who went to the tomb early on Sunday morning was preached in thirty-seven percent of the forty churches. This Scripture was most widely preached at the Easter Sunday morning worship service in the selected South Korean Presbyterian sermons.

The second criterion is the denomination. As previously discussed, the researcher considered various denominations in order to avoid concentrating on one denomination. In this respect, the four selected sermons were from four different denominations. As a result, Church D is selected to avoid the duplication of the denomination, even though the Scripture of the sermon is not the same as that of Churches A, B and C.

The third criterion concerns the number of church members. In this regard, the membership numbers of the four selected churches was to be a minimum of five thousand and a maximum of ten thousand people. These churches are classified as megachurches. What is the reason for considering the number of church members? The number of congregational members has an influence on the other churches, whether intentional or not. The other reason is that their sermons are broadcasted on television. It shows their influence on many Christian in South Korea.

The four churches were selected according to these three criteria. A priority of selection follows the order of the criteria. However, Church D was selected because of the second criterion—denomination. The Scriptures and the titles of the sermons of the four selected churches are as follows:

- Church A, Title: People who met the resurrected Lord; Text: Matthew 28:1-10.
- Church B, Title: Lord of the resurrection; Text: Matthew 28:1-10.
- Church C, Title: They will see me there; Text: Matthew 28:1-10.

- Church D, Title: The great morning; Text: Luke 24:1-12.

After selecting the four sermons, the researcher dictated the audio files in Korean. Thereafter, these were translated into English. During the dictation and translation of the four selected sermons, the researcher strove, as far as possible, to retain the original grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions.

2.3. The Heidelberg method of sermon analysis

It is necessary to briefly look at the history of this method. The Heidelberg method of sermon analysis originated from the research done by homiletical study groups at the Practical Theological Seminary of the Karl Rupprecht University of Heidelberg, Germany, during the late 1970s (Cilliers 2012:2). The method was published for the first time at an international symposium that was held from 8 to 12 September 1986 in Heidelberg (Cilliers 2006:8). The Swiss practical theologian Rudolf Bohren, the German author Gerd Debus, and others, reported this method to a larger homiletical community. This method was advanced by the close reading of literally thousands of sermons (Cilliers 2006:8). Generally, it can be called an intra-textual approach by means of a close reading of sermons. The Ecumenical Association for the Promotion of Preaching is continuously refining this method.

Cilliers analyzed the sermons of the Dutch Reformed Church from the period 1960 to 1980 using this method. He introduces this method as follows:

The method wants to contribute to the theological and empirical evaluation of preaching and to be used to supplement methods that place a greater emphasis on an investigation into the communicative working of preaching. Formally, the methodology consists of a number of analytical and synthesizing steps. On the one hand, the text of the sermon is examined in extenso - its content is investigated linguistically (regarding words, sentences, paragraphs) so that the superficial structure becomes clear. On the other hand, the mutual relations between the linguistic contents are determined in order to allow the basic motives of the sermon to be revealed. These motives together form the depth structure of the sermon. The Heidelberg method of sermon analysis seeks to reveal the explicit and implicit signs of language in sermons. In the process, not only does the method interrogate the sermon text about what it says, but also about what is not said,

what is excluded, pushed aside, transferred and even denied by what was said (Cilliers 2006:8-11).

The first reason for selecting this method is that when the research follows the above-mentioned analytical and synthesizing steps, the superficial and depth structure will be revealed. The second reason for selecting this method is related to the following questions: “Which God is at issue here? What are this God’s characteristics and how does He behave?” (Cilliers 2006:11). As mentioned in the introduction, the phenomenon of God being missing on the pulpit is the main research problem of this study. These questions may facilitate in uncovering the main characteristics of godless sermons. The last reason is that this method is already widely verified, although it does not mean that there are no flaws.

2.3.1. Questions for linguistic signs

The Heidelberg method of sermon analysis is composed of ten questions. These ten questions can be divided into two groups. The first group of questions concerns the superficial structure and linguistic signs. In the following six signals of the sermon, we can then discern the explicit and implicit signs of language in the sermons:

the introductory sentence(s), because they mostly determine the course of the sermon;
 the conclusion, because this indicates how the expectations raised in the first sentence(s) are fulfilled;
 the way in which words in the building up of the sermon are grouped together or are stated in contrast to one another;
 conditional sentences that reveal the active power in the sermon;
 emphases, because they often in fact express uncertainty, and often lead to logical breaks or conflicts in the sermon;
 negations, because they make those issues that the sermons are confronting important, because they adjust positions.
 (Cilliers 2006:11)

On the basis of the above-mentioned signals, the researcher devises the following six questions: what is the introduction of the sermon? What is the conclusion of the sermon? What is the form of the sermon? What conditional sentences are included in the sermon? What is being emphasized in the sermon? What is the negation of the preacher? These six

questions will be further examined in this chapter. Following Dingemans' practical theological methodology, this chapter focuses on the description of the superficial structure of the four selected sermons.

2.3.2. Four basic homiletical questions

The second group of questions concerns the depth structure. The purpose of these four basic homiletical questions not only investigates what the sermon text says, but also what it does not say, that is, what is excluded and pushed aside (Cilliers 2006:11). The following four basic homiletical questions assist in systematizing the inner dynamics of the text:

- Which God is at issue here? What are the characteristics of this God and how does He behave?
- How is the biblical text included in the sermon? And, in keeping with the particular interest of this study: How does it express the Gospel of justification through grace?
- What kind of congregation does the sermon appeal to and imply? What is the relation to the world/other groups?
- How does the preacher him/herself function in the sermon?

(Cilliers 2006:11)

Cilliers (2006:11) mentions that the study of the interaction between the superficial and depth structures, and between explicit and implicit language, offers the potential to interpret the sermon theologically. The four basic homiletical questions are examined in chapter three.

2.4. Linguistic analysis of the selected sermons

At this stage, the researcher will deal with the linguistic features of the text of the sermons so as to reveal the superficial structure, and thereby, disclose the explicit and implicit signs of the language in the sermons. It is a significant stage because disclosing the superficial structure allows the basic motives of the sermon to be revealed. These motives are a very important clue to finding the depth structure of each sermon.

2.4.1. What is the introduction of the sermon?

In general, the introduction of a sermon is considered important. Evans (1981:64) says that an introduction of a sermon is like a porch to a house. Robinson (1980:160) refers to an

introduction of a sermon as follows: “It is the same with men as with donkeys; whoever would hold them fast must get a very good grip on their ears!” “A sermon must begin well and the introduction must get its special job done in good order” (Long 1989:133-134).

There are some different points of view about what the purpose of the introduction is. For example, Evans refers to two main purposes of an introduction: The first is to awaken an interest in the theme, and the second, to prepare the audience for what is to follow (Evans 1981:64-65). Long (1989:137-138) says that the sermon introduction does not have the responsibility of arousing the audience’s interest, and does not need to disclose the agenda of the sermon in advance.

However, most preachers of the South Korean Church seem to agree with Evans’ point of view. According to a survey,¹⁰ the purpose of an introduction of a sermon is to firstly give an explanation of the Scripture that they will preach on, and secondly, to arouse the audience’s interest (Ministry&Theology 2009:64-65). It means that we can discern the aim and intention of the sermon when investigating the introduction of a sermon. In the sections below, the introduction of the four selected sermons will be examined in more detail.

Church A: People who met the resurrected Lord (Matthew 28:1-10)

The sermon starts with a question: “Who did the resurrected Lord meet first?” (A.9) The

¹⁰ This survey is the analysis of preaching in the Korean Church, which was published in 2009. The survey investigated the understanding of the ministry of preaching in the Korean Protestant Church by three institutes: “Ministry & Theology,” “The Korea Society of Homiletics,” and “Global Research” in 2007. Here are some of the details of the survey (Ministry&Theology 2009:26).

Table 1: The research design

Respondent	Senior Pastors in Korean Protestant Church
Area	The whole country
Method of Data Collection	Telephone call (with fax and online)
Sampling	“Proportionate Quota Sampling” according to the ratio of geographical distribution of churches
Method of Sampling	The random sampling in the list of subscribers to Ministry & Theology
Sampling size	578 persons (effective sample)
Sampling error	Maximum tolerance ± 3.9 (confidence interval 95%)
Period of Survey	From Jan 22, 2007 to Feb 5, 2007 (for 15 days)
The Institute of Survey	Ministry & Theology, Global Research

answer to this question is: He met Mary Magdalene first (A.18). The introduction of the sermon ends with the following sentence. “There is a secret in this story” (A.21). The introduction focuses explicitly on the meeting between the resurrected Jesus and Mary Magdalene. It says that there is a secret in the encounter with Jesus and Mary. Therefore, the introduction of the sermon shows its implicit intention and purpose, which is the encounter with the resurrected Jesus Christ.

Church B: Lord of the resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10)

The preacher begins by shouting out the sermon title: “Lord of the resurrection” (B.7). The expression that “an unexpected incident happened” (B.9-13) is mentioned three times in the first paragraph of the sermon introduction. Also, the women were afraid of these unexpected incidents (B.13). The following incidents were not expected but happened to them; the preacher intentionally discloses these incidents that scared the women. In another aspect, the preacher indicates to the audience that we may also encounter unexpected incidents in our daily life.

Church C: They will see me there (Matthew 28:1-10)

The sermon starts with the following sentence: “This is the era of the story of Jesus’ resurrection” (C.7). The sermon immediately engages the main body of the sermon with this sentence. It seems that there is no introduction to the sermon.

Church D: The great morning (Luke 24:1-12)

The sermon starts with the congregation greeting one another and together saying: “The Lord is resurrected” (D.7). After greeting each other, the preacher blesses the congregation with the following words: “I hope that the joy and grace of the resurrected Jesus will be with you and be the foundation of your life” (D.7-8).

The introduction of the sermon looks intensively at the background of today’s biblical texts. Firstly, it explains the phrase: “Very early on Sunday morning” (D.16-19). Secondly, it provides an explanation of the women, who they are, and their state of mind (D.21-40). Thirdly, it describes the reason for the blocked entrance to the tomb (D.42-49). After describing this complicated situation, the preacher intentionally asks the following question: “...how would you react in this situation?” (D.53). This is the explicit linguistic sign.

What is the implicit linguistic sign? The preacher implicitly asks, “Would you react rightly in front of the resurrected Jesus Christ?” The preacher deliberately highlights this problem for the congregation.

2.4.2. What is the conclusion of the sermon?

A sermon must have some kind of conclusion. Traditionally, the conclusion occupied an important role in the sermon. According to Vines (1985:142), the conclusion of the sermon binds the different ideas and emphases of the sermon together into the final thrust upon the minds and hearts of the congregation. The conclusion is the last chance to accomplish the sermon’s purpose (Davis 1958:192). Through the conclusion, we can know what the preacher wants to import and convey in the sermon. Let’s take a look at the conclusion of each of the four selected sermons.

Church A: People who met the resurrected Lord (Matthew 28:1-10)

The conclusion of the sermon is made up of two stories. The first is a story about meeting Santa Claus and Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer (A.219-228). Here, the preacher once again intentionally emphasizes a dramatic encounter. The second story is about the word of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung. He states: “Modern Christians do not believe in miracles thereby there is no miracles in their life” (A.225-226).

To sum it all up, the preacher expects a dramatic encounter with the congregation and the Risen Lord like Mary Magdalene.

Church B: Lord of the resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10)

In the conclusion of the sermon, the preacher repeats the words of Jesus as follows: “Are you peaceful? Do not be afraid! ...go to Galilee” (B.211-213). Our world is going to change dynamically. Nevertheless, the way of Christian life should be the same as the abovementioned words of Jesus Christ, because the life of the resurrected Jesus is in us.

Finally, the preacher expects the congregants to follow the instructions of the resurrected Lord, even though there are unexpected incidents happening in their daily lives.

Church C: They will see me there (Matthew 28:1-10)

The sermon does not have a typical conclusion, which is located at the end of the sermon, as we have already recognized that it seems to have no introduction. The sermon consists of three main points of development. Each main point of development has its own conclusion.

The first conclusion is that Christians must experience the glory of God (C.67-68). The second conclusion is that after experiencing the glory of God, our lives will be changed like Mary Magdalene, Abraham, and Elijah (C.110-117). The third conclusion is that we have to go to Galilee because the resurrected Lord went to Galilee rather than Jerusalem (C.202-210).

Overall, the preacher intends to import the change that takes place in the lives of believers that meet the resurrected Jesus Christ.

Church D: The great morning (Luke 24:1-12)

The main point of the sermon is the unbelief of the believer (D.81). The last paragraph starts with the following sentence: There will be a change when the resurrection of Jesus Christ comes into someone's life (D.203). To conclude, it is natural for change to take place in the lives of Christians after meeting the Risen Lord.

2.4.3. What is the form of the sermon?

What is the form of the sermon? This question concerns the form of preaching. What is the form of preaching? According to Thomas G. Long (1989:92), the sermon form is absolutely vital to the meaning and effect of a sermon. He says, "Instead of thinking of sermon form and content as separate realities, it is more accurate to speak of the form of the content" (Long 1989:93). It means that the form of a sermon provides shape and energy to the sermon (Long 1989:93), and also influences the sermon content. Therefore, Fred B. Craddock (1979:114) indicates the importance of an inner harmony between the form and content of a sermon. Long (1989:96) says that there are many different ways to build up the sermon logically, for instance: outlines, narrative, storytelling, inductive, metaphorical, just to name a few.

In conclusion, it is an important task to investigate the way in which words build up the sermon to understand the implicit linguistic signs.

Church A: People who met the resurrected Lord (Matthew 28:1-10)

The sermon consists of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. See Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1. The logical structure of sermon A

Introduction		Who did the resurrected Lord meet first?
Body	Story 1	Story of Mary Magdalene
	Story 2	Story of the first President of South Korea, Syngman Rhee
	Story 3	Story of the President Lincoln
	Story 4	Story of the miracle of South Korea
	Story 5	Story of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn; a Russian novelist
	Story 6	Story of the preacher
Conclusion		Expect a miracle life with the Risen Lord

As mentioned above, the form contains the content. The outline of the sermon shows what the preacher intentionally proclaims in the sermon. The preacher composed the body of the sermon into six stories. The six stories are about an encounter with Jesus Christ. Their lives are dramatically changed after meeting Jesus Christ; it is like a miracle took place. Why does the sermon focus on the change and the miracle? Likewise, the preacher expects this change and miracle in the life of each church member. The purpose and intention of the preacher becomes clear when we look at the form of the sermon.

Church B: Lord of the resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10)

The logical structure of the sermon follows the normal structure of an introduction, body and conclusion, explained as follows:

Table 2.2. The logical structure of sermon B

Introduction		The women who are afraid of the unexpected incidents.
Body	1	Are you peaceful?
	2	Do not be afraid!
	3	Go to Galilee.
Conclusion		Follow the instruction of Jesus Christ.

What can we deduce from the logical structure of the sermon? Is the purpose and intention of the preacher not very obvious? The aim of the sermon and preacher's expectation is that the congregational members will be peaceful and not afraid, even if they have been exposed to a dangerous situation, overcome an unexpected danger, or had to cope with their mission. Implicitly, the aim of the sermon is to proclaim that the life of the resurrected Jesus is within us. Because of this premise, we are peaceful and not afraid of unexpected situations, and therefore, can go to Galilee.

Church C: They will see me there (Matthew 28:1-10)

The sermon has its own logical structure, but it is not like Church A, B and D. As indicated in the previous analysis, the sermon does not have a general introduction and conclusion. The sermon is comprised of the following three main ideas:

Table 2.3. The logical structure of sermon C

Theme 1	Experience the glory of God
Theme 2	Respond to the Word of God quickly
Theme 3	Go to Galilee to encounter the Risen Lord

When we look at the three themes, it is clear that they are connected to each other. The logical flow of sermon C is like that. Mary experienced the glory of God. After this, her life was changed. That is why Mary could respond quickly to the instruction of the angels. The Risen Lord calls us to Galilee like Mary Magdalene and His disciples.

Church D: The great morning (Luke 24:1-12)

The sermon has the following main problem: The unbelief of the believer (D.81). The main problem is the key of the body. The body of the sermon consists of three parts: stating a problem, explaining the reason for the problem, and suggesting a resolution. See Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4. The logical structure of sermon D

Introduction		The women went to the tomb.
Body	State a problem	The unbelief of the believer

	Explain a reason	Isolation the Word of God from the reality of life
	Suggest a resolution	Enlighten the Word of God
Conclusion		Experience the resurrection of Jesus

The sermon states a problem, after which it suggests a resolution. The logical structure of the sermon is simple and clear. The problem is that they did not know the true meaning of the resurrection. But when Jesus opened up and explained the Scripture, at that time they realized His death and His resurrection. Therefore, the Word of God is the resolution of the unbelief of the believer.

2.4.4. What conditional sentences are included in the sermon?

What are conditional sentences? Conditional sentences generally begin as follows: “If,” “I desire,” “I hope,” “I wish,” “When,” etc. Cilliers (2004:118) warns against using conditional sentences. We are able to express our false hypotheses, assertions and convictions through conditional sentences (Park 2010:19). In other words, we can know the preacher’s hypotheses, assertions and convictions through conditional sentences. Meaningful conditional sentences were found in the sermons of Church A, B and C, but not Church D.

Church A: People who met the resurrected Lord (Matthew 28:1-10)

The preacher says: “Dear brothers and sisters! Don’t give up no matter the situation. Don’t think, ‘I was born with a dirty spoon’ because God can even use a dirty spoon. Why did God establish the Church? He established the Church to turn a dirty spoon into a golden spoon. Whoever meets the Risen Jesus, will experience a miracle” (A.161-164).

The last sentence, which begins with “whoever,” is the conditional sentence. This conditional sentence shows the preacher’s hypothesis and assertion in the sermon. Next, the paragraph comes to the two Presidents’ stories. Their stories are miraculous. We confess that nothing is impossible for the Risen Lord. In other words, the Risen Lord can generate a miracle in our lives. Nevertheless, there is a problem. Who can guarantee that someone will experience a miracle like the two Presidents and Mary Magdalene? In using the word “miracle,” the preacher should have been more careful.

As we closely examine the logical structure of the sermon above, the six stories focus on a

miracle after meeting with the Risen Lord. This is the core idea of the sermon. In this context, the preacher says: “Dear brothers and sisters! Do not be discouraged. When you look to the Lord, he will guide you and be with you. I surely believe that He is alive and He is with us all the time.” (A.213-214). Not to say that it is all wrong.

However, it is required to consider the following questions: “Who is a main character in the sermon”? The six characters of the six stories are the main heroes and heroines. When they look to the Lord, their lives are changed dramatically. In this sense, their lives are preached to us as an example in the sermon. This kind of sermon is called biographical preaching (Greidanus 1970:65). According to Greidanus (1970:65), the objection raised against biographical preaching is that it can be anthropocentric. That is why the Risen Lord seemed to appear as a cameo in the sermon. In fact, the Risen Lord has gone to find them first, before they looked for Him.

Church B: Lord of the resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10)

The preacher says: “What I want to say when we continue to doubt is that we forsake our first love (B.127-128), If we do not react in this way, we can say that we have forsaken our first love” (B.131). What does “this reaction” mean? It means that when Jesus asks us: “Are you peaceful?” Our reaction should be “Yes”. However, if you continue to doubt, your answer is “No”. If you continue to doubt, you forsake your first love.

The preacher goes on to say: “If you are also afraid of an unexpected scary situation in your life, you are the church in Sardis. In this respect, you are dead. You have the reputation of being alive” (B.169-171).

Here, the preacher needs to consider the following questions: Does God really evaluate us like the Ephesus Church and Sardis Church when we are lacking peace and are afraid of an unexpected situation? Is there any biblical basis to interpret this text in this way?

Church C: They will see me there (Matthew 28:1-10)

The preacher says: “When we look back at the people Jesus used, they were very diligent” (C.77-78). The preacher gives an example of this conditional sentence as follows: the story of Abraham unwittingly entertained angels (C.78), the story of Abraham offering his son Isaac

as a sacrifice (C.78), and the parable of the talents (C.80). Nevertheless, there is a logical leap. That is why this conditional sentence seems to make an error of oversimplifying. In other words, more logical basis is required for oversimplifying.

The preacher says: “When we meet Jesus Christ there, we are successful people, winners, and happy people” (C.182-183). According to the flow of the sermon, it means that we are successful people, winners, and happy people like Mary Magdalene. “Like Mary Magdalene”. This conditional sentence assumes that we can be like Mary. Her life is a very unique life in the biblical text. Therefore, it is required to explain what it is like to be Mary Magdalene.

2.4.5. What is being emphasized in the sermon?

The preacher can misinterpret a biblical text by justifying his/her own proclamation. Cilliers (2004:120) warns, the reason for this is that when a preacher proclaims the promise of God, they need to understand not only *what* God says but also *why* He says it. This means that if the preacher does not fully understand what God says and why He says it, he/she can make the following mistakes on the pulpit: add uncertain data, make a logical break, and/or create conflict. The aim of this task is to examine these above-mentioned mistakes. For instance, uncertain information, rumors, or logical disruptions are found in the sermons of Church A, B and C, but not in the sermon of Church D.

Church A: People who met the resurrected Lord (Matthew 28:1-10)

Mary Magdalene is the main heroine of the sermon. The preacher says: “I am not emphasizing the resurrection of Jesus today because it is a fact” (A.16-17). Like the preacher mentioned in the introduction of the sermon, the preacher does not emphasize the resurrection of Jesus, but rather emphasizes Mary Magdalene in the sermon.

In this respect, the preacher says: “He (Jesus) chose to appear to Mary first, instead of his disciples. He loved her more than His eleven disciples” (A.41-42). The preacher said that Jesus loved her more than his eleven disciples. He/she wants to emphasize and give a special meaning to the encounter with Jesus and Mary.

However, the preacher has to consider the following questions: Did Jesus really love Mary

more than the others? Did Jesus meet Mary first because of this reason? Is there any evidence to expound this in this way?

Church B: Lord of the resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10)

The preacher made up the following story:

Similarly, a woman brought a washing machine with her into a marriage. After constant use over many years, the machine no longer worked like it should. Whenever she did the laundry, it irritated her. The machine was frequently out of order. So she said to her husband, “Honey, buy a washing machine for me”. He replied, “Fix it and use it again”. So she fixed it again and again. Until the machine could no longer be fixed. She asked her husband again. “Honey, let’s buy a brand new one”. Her husband bought the newest type of washing machine for her. Then one day when she was using the washing machine, he asked: “Is it working well?” (B.55-61)

Jesus asks, “Are you peaceful?” The preacher asserts that the question: “Is it working well?” is the same question as “Are you peaceful?” The preacher claims that the situation of the two stories is the same. This is a typical uncertain statement, because these two situations do not seem to be the same.

The preacher importantly deals with the words of Jesus: “Are you peaceful? Do not be afraid; go to Galilee”. But there are false assertions with these three instructions. The preacher asserts as follows: “If you are not peaceful, you have the same problem of Ephesus Church. If you are afraid of an unexpected incident, you have the same problem of Sardis Church”. The preacher interprets the meaning of “Go to Galilee” as “build a church” because the reason Jesus has to go to Galilee is to build His own Church. It seems to be wrong to interpret the biblical text in this manner. It seems like a word game: A banana is long and a long thing is a train. A train is fast and a fast thing is an airplane. This word game finally connects two words banana and airplane, which do not have any relevance to each other. In this respect, there is a leap in the logic of the sermon.

Church C: They will see me there (Matthew 28:1-10)

The preacher says: “He showed that message through his life: “Do not go downtown” (C.126), He called his disciples from the countryside rather than downtown (C.129-130). The

risen Lord went to Galilee where the poor, orphans, widows, tax collectors and prostitutes are (C.152-153).

Jesus calls his disciples to Galilee. The preacher puts great emphasis on Galilee as a special place. The title, ‘They will see me there,’ also shows it, because “there” indicates Galilee. In this regard, “Why Galilee?” is an important question. The preacher provides the reason. Firstly, Galilee is not downtown. In other words, Galilee is a countryside where the poor, orphans, widows, tax collectors, and prostitutes are. Because of them, Jesus went to Galilee and not to Jerusalem. However, this logical step cannot answer the following: there are poor, orphans, widows, tax collectors, and prostitutes in Jerusalem too.

2.4.6. What is the negation of the preacher?

According to Park (2010:20), the preacher’s negation can be based on his/her theological and personal background because their background can consciously or unconsciously be reflected in the sermon. He goes on to say that the preacher sometimes uses a dualistic method, e.g. light and darkness, good and evil, truth and false, and conservative party and progressive party (Park 2010:20). The preacher’s negation was found in the sermon of Church A, but not in Church B, C and D.

Church A: People who met the resurrected Lord (Matthew 28:1-10)

The dualistic method is used in the sermon as follows: “We say that someone was born with a ‘dirty spoon’ and a ‘golden spoon’” (A.96-97). Mary Magdalene met Jesus Christ, after that her life changed dramatically. The preacher gives his/her own testimony in the sermon. His/her life also changed dramatically. The preacher used to be a dirty spoon, but his/her life has become like a golden spoon. His/her background was reflected in the sermon.

2.5. Conclusion: The superficial structure of the four selected sermons

Until now, the linguistic signs of the four selected sermons have been analyzed by using the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis. Through this process, the researcher could examine the explicit and implicit signs of the language in the four sermons. The superficial structure of the four selected sermons can be described as follows:

Church A: People who met the resurrected Lord (Matthew 28:1-10)

What is the superficial structure of the sermon, which can be identified through analyzing the explicit and implicit linguistic signs? The title of the sermon is: “People who met the resurrected Lord”. The sermon consists of six stories. These six stories are about the people who met the resurrected Jesus Christ. Firstly, how their lives were before meeting Jesus Christ. Secondly, how they met Jesus Christ. Finally, how their lives were changed after meeting Jesus Christ. The incident of the encounter with Jesus Christ resulted in a miracle occurring in their lives.

Therefore, the preacher expects the same miracle of the encounter with the resurrected Jesus to happen to the church members once again. The preacher gives the congregation the expectation of a miracle in their lives after encountering the resurrected Lord.

Church B: Lord of the resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10)

The premise of the sermon is that the life of the resurrection is within us and that unexpected incidents will always happen in our daily lives. Nevertheless, we should be peaceful in any situation because we have the life of the resurrection. We should not be afraid of any situation because we have the life of the resurrection. Jesus calls us to go to Galilee because we have the life of the resurrection. Therefore, the preacher points out that the congregation should live to follow the instruction of the resurrected Jesus Christ. If they do not live like that, the resurrected Jesus Christ will punish them like the Church of Ephesus and Sardis. This is the basic superficial structure of the sermon.

Church C: They will see me there (Matthew 28:1-10)

The sermon looks as if it should consist of three sermons. These three sermons seem to be independent, but they are actually well connected into one sermon. Firstly, we have to experience the glory of God when we live by faith in this world. Secondly, the experience of the glory of God is a strong motivation in our lives. Finally, we have to go to Galilee, where we can experience the glory of God, in order for our cooled hearts to beat again. This is the superficial structure of the sermon.

Additionally, there is a precondition. For various reasons, people have lost their enthusiasm and they have become idle. This is considered as a problem throughout the whole sermon.

For this reason, we have to go to Galilee to recover our lost enthusiasm by meeting the resurrected Lord.

Church D: The great morning (Luke 24:1-12)

The sermon is based on the following logical steps: state the problem, find a cause, and suggest a resolution. The problem is the unbelief of the believers. The preacher says that this problem is not only the women's problem, but also our problem. The cause is the separation of the Word of God from our lives. The resolution is that we need to realize the Word of God, and experience the Risen Lord. This is the superficial structure of the sermon.

CHAPTER 3:

HOMILETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED SERMONS OF THE KOREAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

3.1. Introduction

What are the basic elements of preaching? Cilliers identifies these as follows: God, the biblical text, the congregation and the preacher (Cilliers 2004:24). The four basic homiletical questions are based on these four basic elements of preaching. In this chapter, the researcher will investigate the depth structure of the four selected sermons. In the previous chapter, the researcher focused on the linguistic analysis. As a result, we can comprehend the superficial structure of each sermon. Based on this understanding, the researcher will now examine the four basic homiletical questions.

3.2. Homiletical analysis of the selected sermons

As mentioned in chapter 2, the four basic homiletical questions are: “Which God is at issue here?” “How is the biblical text included in the sermon?” “What kind of congregation does the sermon appeal to, and imply?” “How does the preacher him/herself function in the sermon?” The important thing is that the homiletical analysis does not only interrogate the sermon text—what it says, but also scrutinizes what it not said—what is excluded.

3.2.1. Which God is at issue here?

Preaching is the proclamation of God’s Word and God’s deed (Greidanus 1988:7-9). John Calvin (Inst. 1.6) says that the Scriptures clearly show us the true God. God reveals Himself in the Bible—directly and indirectly. For example, He is the Creator, the Revealer, the Judge, the Savior, the Father, the Good Shepherd and Yahweh, just to name a few. Craddock (1985:52) says, “God’s Word in the world is the way of the sermon in the world”. Preachers have a special responsibility to proclaim God’s characteristics and His behavior to His people.

The first question is about God. Louw (1998:330) notes: “Each pastor has a unique image of God which reflects his/her own experience of God and what He means to him/her

personally”. He warns that an inappropriate God image can lead to spiritual illness. This is why it is important to discern what the sermon says about God (Louw 2008:92).

In this respect, the aim of the first homiletical question is to analyze what the sermon says about God—which image of God is revealed in the sermon?

Church A, B and C: Matthew 28:1-10

We should first look at which God is being referred to here and what He is doing in today’s biblical texts.

Matthew 28:1-10 can be divided into two parts. The first part includes verses 1 to 7. This is about the angel’s proclamation of the resurrected Jesus Christ to the women who came to the tomb. Here, the women saw the empty tomb. The angel says: “Do not be afraid. Come and see the empty tomb. Go and tell the eleven disciples”. The empty tomb is circumstantial evidence of Jesus’ resurrection (Hagner 1995:870); not concrete evidence. In this situation, the angel says: “He has been raised from the dead”. For the women, the angel’s testimony is not concrete evidence because they still doubt the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The second part includes verses 8 to 10. This is about the appearance of Jesus Christ to the women after His resurrection. This is concrete evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The women saw Him dead on the cross and buried in the tomb. In other words, they are witnesses of the death of Jesus, but then they meet the Risen Lord. The reason for the empty tomb becomes clear. This is the moment the angel’s testimony is confirmed.

As a result, the God who should be proclaimed in today’s biblical texts is the resurrected God (the Son). John Calvin (1844:338) says: “Justly, therefore, does Paul say that there will be no gospel, and that the hope of salvation will be vain and fruitless, unless we believe that Christ is risen from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:14.)”. In his opinion, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the core of the Gospel. Therefore, the resurrected God (the Son) from the dead should be proclaimed in the words chosen for the Easter Sunday morning sermon. The resurrection of Jesus Christ should be demonstrated by the empty tomb, the testimony of the angels, and the encounter with Jesus Christ.

Church A: People who met the resurrected Lord

Which God is at issue here and how does He behave in the sermon? The Risen Jesus Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene. The Risen Lord met Mary first. The core of the sermon is the meeting and encounter with the resurrected Jesus. Verses 8 to 10 are about the encounter between Mary Magdalene and the Risen Jesus.

There is one point that should be carefully considered here. Does the sermon focus on the resurrected Jesus Christ or the meeting as an event? According to a previous analysis of the superficial structure of the sermon, the preacher focuses on the meeting as a special event. For a clear example, the preacher says in the introduction of the sermon: “I am not emphasizing the resurrection of Jesus today because it is a fact” (A.16-17). Importantly, six stories also deal with the encounter as an incident. The structure of these six stories is very simple, which is as follows: Time of suffering, encounter with Jesus, and new life. Each story pays attention to a dramatic encounter, rather than the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

At the conclusion of the sermon, the preacher says: “Please, believe in the Lord who will cause miracles to happen in your life, as he did in the lives of President Rhee, President Lincoln and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn” (A.227-229). What does it mean? If you meet Jesus Christ, there will be a miracle in your life. This is the purpose of the preacher. Therefore, it seems like the preacher intentionally pushes aside the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In sum, the resurrected God (the Son) from the dead is not rightfully proclaimed in this sermon. Instead, His resurrection is considered as a cameo and a meeting as an event occupies the core position of the sermon.

Church B: Lord of the resurrection

The sermon shows the God of peace and life. For example, the preacher says that “...the Risen Lord is the Lord of peace” (B.51-52), “God is peace” (B.75), “...the life of the resurrected Jesus” (B.143, 152, 162, 172, 211, 214). The preacher proclaims that the God of peace gives His peace and life to us. According to the previous analysis of the sermon’s logical structure, this can be recognized. The preacher deals with the words of Jesus as follows: “Are you peaceful? Do not be afraid. Go to Galilee” (B.46-47), because the women were afraid of unexpected incidents occurring and no longer had peace of mind.

The preacher also deals with the behavior of Jesus Christ. The Lord went to Galilee to build up a church (B.190). There is no evidence to interpret in this manner, but the preacher deals with this behavior of Jesus Christ as a very important aspect. In fact, the resurrected Jesus Christ went to Galilee in compliance with His promise. At the end of the sermon, the preacher says: Go to Galilee and build up a church (B.213). The preacher views this behavior of Jesus Christ as an exemplary deed for the congregation.

There is also a further image of God as the Judge. For example, “The Lord rebuked them...” (B. 120-132, 167-171). If we lose our peace of mind, He will remove our lampstand from us like the Ephesus Church. If we are afraid of an unexpected situation, He will remove our lampstand from us like the Sardis Church.

To sum up, the resurrected God (the Son) from the dead is also not rightfully proclaimed in this sermon.

Church C: They will see me there

The sermon describes the “glory of the resurrected Jesus Christ” (C.48, 49, 51, 52, 62, 68, 71, 72, 90, 95). The resurrected Jesus Christ is the glorious God, the Son. The preacher wants the congregation to see the glory of God. In this respect, the preacher said “...when we hear the Word of God, when we praise the Lord, when we live by faith, we have to see the glory of God” (C.67-68). The glorious resurrected God (the Son) gives His *Shalom* to Mary (C.174). The resurrected Jesus Christ gives His *Shalom*, peace, to His people. He calls His people to Galilee. For example, God calls Moses (C.138), Abraham (C.138-139), and the eleven disciples (C.179) to Galilee.

There is also other behavior of Jesus Christ that is significant here. “He entered the troubled world and came to the sick people in the midst of conflict and battle” (C.166-167). The preacher gives a reason to go to Galilee. The resurrected Jesus went to Galilee, which can be compared to the countryside, rather than to Jerusalem, which can be likened to downtown.

Overall, the sermon also focuses on the words of the resurrected Jesus as instruction for our lives today.

Church D: Luke 24:1-12

Firstly, we should look at which God is being referred to here and what He is doing in today's biblical texts. Luke 24:1-12 can be divided into two parts: the first part includes verses 1 to 10, and the second part includes verses 11 and 12.

The first part is almost the same as the first part of Matthew 28:1-7. The difference, however, is that the women's names are added in Luke chapter 24. The second part is about Peter. Jesus' disciples did not believe the women's testimony. Therefore, Peter went to the tomb and saw that the tomb was empty. He went back home wondering what had happened. The significant difference between the two biblical texts, are firstly, that the appearance of the resurrected Lord to Mary Magdalene is excluded in Luke chapter 24, and secondly, the testimony of the angels. The angel said: "Remember how He told you, while He was still with you in Galilee" (Luke 24:6). What does Jesus say? He says: "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again" (Luke 24:7). He has risen as He said before. That is why He is not there and the tomb is empty.

The resurrected Jesus Christ does not appear in Luke 24:1-12. However, there are more witnesses who saw the empty tomb. The two angels appeared to the women as men. No one saw the actual resurrection of Jesus, but many people saw the empty tomb.

In conclusion, God (the Son) has risen from the dead like He had said to them in Galilee. The resurrected Jesus is God who was raised again, as He tells them.

Church D: The great morning

The sermon begins to show that the women did not believe the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but that Jesus Christ told them of His resurrection when He was still with them. According to the Scriptures, Christ died for our sins and was raised again (D.128-132). The sermon shows that God (the Son) lives in order to accomplish the Scriptures.

To sum up, the preacher seems to faithfully reflect the biblical text in the sermon, even though there are many issues and ways to deal with the theme of the resurrection of Jesus

Christ.

3.2.2. In what way is the biblical text included in the sermon?

A sermon is based on a biblical text. As we well know, “*Sola Scriptura*” was the slogan of the Reformation. The Reformers understood Scripture to be the Word of God (McGrath 1988:152). As mentioned earlier, preaching is the proclamation of the Word of God. According to Calvin, preaching is the expounding of God’s message in Scripture (Buttrick 1994:28). Therefore, a sermon must be biblical and God’s Word must be the subject matter of every sermon (Hostetler 1986:49).

“Preaching is a word of God only insofar as it begins with and interprets a scriptural text” (Buttrick 1994:29). When preachers choose a text in the Scriptures, they have the responsibility to interpret the chosen biblical text properly. In other words, they can also interpret incorrectly.

In this sense, the aim of the second homiletical question is to analyze the incorrect interpretation of the biblical text and to identify the preacher’s prejudice.

Church A: People who met the resurrected Lord (Matthew 28:1-10)

The sermon focuses on the meeting between Mary Magdalene and the resurrected Jesus Christ (verses 9 to 10). The preacher does not interpret the empty tomb and the angel’s testimony in verses 1 to 8. Therefore, the preacher intentionally pushes aside verses 1 to 8.

The sermon begins with that following sentence: “Who did the resurrected Lord meet first?” (A.9). According to the preacher’s interpretation, He met Mary Magdalene first (A.18). “He (Jesus) chose to appear to Mary first instead of His disciples. He loved her more than His eleven disciples” (A.42).

Firstly, the preacher interprets that Jesus met Mary Magdalene first but there was also the other Mary. Look at verse 1: “...Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb,” and verse 9: “Suddenly Jesus met them”. According to Donald A. Hagner (1995:874), “The resurrected Jesus appeared to the two women....” This means that Jesus met Mary Magdalene and the other Mary first. But the preacher excludes the other Mary.

Secondly, the preacher interprets that Jesus loved Mary Magdalene more than His eleven disciples. It is incontrovertible to interpret it in such a way, because it is difficult to find a clue in the literal exegesis of Matthew 28:1-10. Additionally, verse 9 says: “Jesus met them... And they ran to him....” Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were together.

To sum up, the preacher wants to create a more dramatic encounter with Jesus and Mary in today’s biblical texts. That is why he/she excludes the other Mary and interprets that Jesus loved Mary more than His other disciples.

Church B: Lord of the resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10)

The introduction of the sermon describes the unexpected incidents. The women were afraid of the unexpected incidents that took place, i.e. there was a violent earthquake (B.15); an angel of the Lord appeared to them (B.20); the dead body of Jesus was gone (B.35); suddenly, Jesus met them (B.39). The preacher expresses all these incidents in today’s biblical texts as unexpected scary events. It can be interpreted as frightening because the angel and Jesus tell them: “Do not be afraid” (Matthew 28:5, 10).

Importantly, the sermon deals with the Words of Jesus as follows: “Greetings” (Matthew 28:9), “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me” (Matthew 28:10).

Here, the preacher interprets “Greetings” as a question, like “Are you peaceful?” (B.34). The first word of Jesus, “*Chairet*”¹¹ (Χ α ι ρ ε τ ε ς) is commonly used as a salutation in the first century context, even though the meaning of “*Chairete*”¹¹ is rooted in “*Shalom*,” which means peace (Hagner 1995:874). Therefore, the interpretation of the preacher might be controversial.

Additionally, the preacher asserts that when Jesus asks us, “Are you peaceful?” we should answer: “Yes, we are peaceful”. If you are doubtful, you will be scolded like the Ephesus Church (B.122-123). However, the problem is that there is no connection between Matthew

¹¹ According to Donald A. Hagner (1995:788), when Jesus was arrested by the chief priests and the elders of the people, Judas said, “Greetings (Χαίρε), Rabbi!” and kissed him (Matthew 26:49).

28:9 and Revelation 2:4. In other words, there is no association between the following two contexts: the context of losing the first love (the Ephesus Church) and the context of being afraid (the women).

Once again, a similar logic can be found. “If you are also afraid of an unexpected scary situation in your life, you are the church in Sardis” (B.169-170). Jesus says in verse 10: “Do not be afraid”.

Overall, the preacher wants to emphasize the words of Jesus Christ, which in his/her point of view, Jesus gives us as an important instruction for our lives. In this sense, the congregation should literally follow His instruction.

There is also an incomprehensible interpretation. “The Lord went to Galilee to build up a church” (B.190). The preacher gives an explanation as to why Jesus went to Galilee. According to him/her, this interpretation is based on Matthew chapter 16, verses 16 to 20; Peter’s confession of Christ. In fact, a logical interruption can be found to link the following biblical texts: Revelation 2:1-5, 3:1-3 and Matthew 16:16-20.

Church C: They will see me there (Matthew 28:1-10)

The sermon can be classified as a three-point sermon. Sermon C is thus composed of three points. Each point deals with the following theme: “the glory of the resurrected Jesus Christ”. They are explained as follows:

In terms of the first point, the preacher interprets that the women experienced the glory of God by means of a violent earthquake (verse 2), an angel’s appearance (verses 2 to 3), and a meeting with the resurrected Jesus Christ (verses 9 to 10).

The second point describes the women’s response. The angel says: “...go quickly and tell his disciples” (verse 7). The women hurried away from the tomb (verse 8). The preacher interprets the women’s response, stating that they hurried away from the tomb because they had experienced the glory of God.

The preacher applies the words of the angel and the resurrected Jesus, specifically verse 7

and 10, similar to the statement, “We should go to Galilee” (C.123, 154, 164, 193, 209). Here, the preacher provides a reason to go to Galilee:

Why Galilee? Galilee is not a city. There is no department store there. Galilee is located in the countryside. He demonstrated that message through his life: “Do not go downtown”. It means that you should go to poor people such as tax collectors, prostitutes, widows, and orphans. Jesus said, let’s meet at Galilee. This is such a great grace for me. Jesus Christ ministered in Galilee and in Nazareth, rather than Jerusalem. He called his disciples to go to the countryside rather than downtown. He went to the lowest place, rather than the highest place. (C.125-131)

It thus appears that the preacher imparts new meaning to the place of Galilee. He seems to place too much emphasis on Galilee. As mentioned above, the resurrected Jesus Christ went to Galilee in compliance with His promise.

Church D: The great morning (Luke 24:1-12)

The sermon makes the unbelief of the believer an issue (D.81). In this sense, the preacher presents some evidence that the women did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus. Firstly, the women prepared spices and ointments (D.29). Secondly, when they realized that the body of Jesus Christ was not in the tomb, they did not cry out Hallelujah and dance with great joy. Why? They did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ (D.52-54).

The preacher provides the following explanation for the women’s unbelief: “The problem is forgetting the words of Jesus” (D.110). The preacher finds the clue in his/her assertion from Luke chapter 24, verse 6: “He is not here! He has risen from the dead! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee”. Unlike the other Gospels, Luke has an angelic appeal to the women to remember what Jesus had said to them in Galilee (Nolland 1993:1190). Therefore, the preacher intentionally adds meaning to verse 6.

The preacher describes the life of Jesus Christ as follows:

Jesus did not just live on his own authority. He lived according to certain principles. Let’s see First Corinthians 15:3: “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures”. Verse 4: “That he

was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures”. He lived according to the Scriptures in order to accomplish the Scriptures. (D.128-132)

Here, the preacher explains the way Jesus lived. He willingly lived according to the Scriptures. Therefore, the preacher interprets Luke 24:13-35 as a solution to our problem—the unbelief of the believers. The problem should be solved when we remember the Word of God (D.139-160).

3.2.3. What kind of congregation does the sermon appeal to, and imply?

This question is about the congregation. Fred B. Craddock (1979:42) says, “The goal of biblical study is to allow God to address man through the medium of the text”. Preaching is to listen to the Word of God. Thomas G. Long (1989:45) states that preachers do not go to the Word of God alone, but go on behalf of the faithful community. Therefore, when the preacher listens to the Word of God and the truth of God’s claims, he/she turns back toward their congregation.

Long goes on to say that “...the preacher needs to have such gifts as a sensitivity to human need, a discerning eye for the connection between faith and life, an ear attuned to hearing the voice of scripture, compassion, growing personal faith, and the courage to tell the truth” (Long 1989:21). The preacher’s task is to wrestle with the text and relate God’s unchanging Word to what is happening in our own daily existence and to our ever-changing world (Lloyd-Jones 1976:109; Stott 1982:144,150). In this sense, preachers need to expound on the lives of the congregation in the world.

The aim of the third homiletical question is to answer these questions: What kind of congregation does the sermon appeal to, and imply? What is their relation to the world/other groups?

Church A: People who met the resurrected Lord (Matthew 28:1-10)

According to the preacher’s experience, he/she affirms that the obvious thing is that people are not faithful (A.60-61). The preacher provides the following example:

King David gave us a good example. When David escaped the coup plot of his son, Absalom, many people reviled him and pelted stones at him. Then his soldiers told him:

“Let us go over and cut off their heads”. David said to them: “Leave them, my son is trying to take my life”. (A.62-66)

The preacher considers that people’s lives are the same as David’s life. He/she says that when I look at our congregation, they also have many difficulties. They are lonely, discouraged and sad, suffering from depression (A.74-75). Everyone has some sort of difficulty in his or her daily life. People usually depend on someone during difficult times, but the problem is that people are not faithful. This is why a difficult situation becomes so much worse.

Therefore, the preacher expects that the congregation should lean only on God because, “He seeks those who are lonely, poor and unsuccessful. He holds their hand and raises them up” (A.85-86); “God will never abandon us, nor forsake us” (A81). God is not like a human being.

In this respect, the preacher places an emphasis on the encounter with Jesus Christ.

The encounter with Jesus is eternal to us. The encounter with Jesus Christ is different from the encounter with human beings because it is impossible for a human encounter to be eternal. There is no special meeting between human beings, even though we meet every day. The encounter with Jesus Christ is the eternal meeting and it gives us life, power, miracles and blessings. (A.123-127)

Life in contemporary South Korea is facing the following problem: since the financial crisis in 1997, the polarization of wealth has become more serious. Sarcastic comments regarding the gap between the rich and the poor is becoming all too common, with people saying that the rich are born with a golden spoon and the poor are born with a dirty spoon.

The preacher gives an explanation of Mary Magdalene. “Mary is alone. She does not have family.... She was born with a dirty spoon” (A.96-97). However, her life was changed after her encounter with Jesus Christ. “She is the happiest lady among the women” (A.98-99).

In conclusion, the preacher expects the congregation to rely on God because they are in the same position as Mary—as a dirty spoon.

Church B: Lord of the resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10)

The sermon has the following major premise: We cannot always get what we want. That is life. The preacher gives the following example:

When we get married, we dream of a happy marriage. May I ask, are you truly happy? Why don't you answer? After a few days of being married, we begin to experience the unpleasant things. We think of having a baby to make our marriage a happier one. Wives fall pregnant and their bellies expand. May I ask the women, "When were you happier?" After having a baby? When the baby was still in your womb you were happier. Although it was hard to live a daily life, the happiest time was when the baby was still in the womb. However, we expected ten months to pass quickly. During that time, we thought we would be happy when the baby is born. However, after delivering the baby, we realized we were happier when the baby was in the womb because we need to change their diapers and wash their feeding bottles. Finally, we are consumed by our lovely babies. Then, as parents, mothers think they will be happy when the child begins to walk itself. But when they begin to walk they touch everything and break it. Then we think, after they are a little bigger we will be happy. Are you really happy? Now they no longer listen to you. They then begin school. We say to them, "Study hard". But they do not usually study hard. Sometimes we would receive a phone call from their teacher because they have gotten into trouble. Then we expect it to be fine when our children have matured. But when they are fully grown, they begin to challenge us. After that, we think it will be good if they marry. The reality is not like that. When they marry, they begin to ask you other things. (A.83-100)

People dream of a happy marriage, social advancement and success, but it does not always go the way we expect. More recently, issues raising concern in South Korean society are that of early retirement and failing businesses. According to the National Tax Administration, the start-up of private business between the years 2004 and 2013 was 9.49 million, but 7.93 million of these failed, therefore the survival rate of private business was 16.4 percent. Since the financial crisis of 1997, many people were forced into early retirement. They began their own businesses, but many of these did not succeed. The preacher says that "...when you start a business, we dream of success. If we are successful, we dream to spend our money on mission. It doesn't happen the way we expect. This is how life works in this world" (A.104-106). The preacher presumes that the lives of congregational members are exactly the same.

When the women, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, went to the tomb, they did not imagine that the unexpected incidents would happen. However, they faced an unexpected earthquake, an angel, and the disappearance of Jesus Christ's dead body. They were afraid of these unexpected incidents. The resurrected Jesus Christ appeared to them and said, "Are you peaceful? Do not be afraid. Go to Galilee." The preacher appeals to the congregation to respond like Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.

In conclusion, the preacher understands that the congregation has the same problem as the women in the story mentioned above. They also face unexpected incidents in their daily lives, problems arise and nothing goes as planned.

Church C: They will see me there (Matthew 28:1-10)

The sermon describes the current life circumstances of people in South Korea: "In more recent years, we are all living under a collective depression because of chronic fatigue, lethargy, and the bad news of Christians" (C.104-105). When congregants hear the words: "under a collective depression because of chronic fatigue," "lethargy," and "the bad news of Christians," they imagine the following:

When we listen with collective depression, we can easily imagine a recent accident such as the tragic sinking of the ferry *Sewol*, the disease MERS, or a reckless murder. What is chronic fatigue and lethargy? Most workers are too tired. They do not have any hope because they can be easily dismissed. What is bad news for Christians? We hear about the crimes of religious leaders in public news such as murder, sexual offences, and misappropriation. When we turn on the television, we are exposed to this type of news; unfortunately it is everywhere. Many people suffer from a panic disorder. According to the National Health Insurance Corporation (2011:27-61), in 2006 the number of panic disorder patients was 74 per 100,000 population. In 2011, the number of the panic disorder patients was 119 per 100,000 population. The growing rate of patients is 9.9% per year. It seems that the preacher understands the situation of people well. Therefore, he/she gives the following solution:

In the Old Testament, Elijah met God in the midst of severe depression while suffering from a panic disorder. When Elijah heard the soft voice of God, he was healed. After meeting the living God, he no longer got tired, and ran in front of Ahab's golden chariot despite being bare foot. He became a very enthusiastic person. (C.110-113)

What is the solution? The solution is that we should experience the glory of God. When we experience the glory of God, we will become peaceful and brave (C.92-93, 99-101, 114-117).

Conversely, the sermon points out the nature of human beings. People pursue a good place and a comfortable place (C.134). The preacher says that: “We should not only live hopping for success” (C.150-151). The resurrected Jesus calls His disciples to Galilee, not to Jerusalem. Galilee is in the countryside and wilderness, but Jerusalem is downtown and a comfortable place. The preacher expects that the congregational members should go to Galilee, not to Jerusalem, and not to a comfortable place, as follows:

The resurrected Jesus Christ did not call his disciples to a luxurious place in the centre of Jerusalem. He did not say: “Let’s eat together and take a rest”. Jesus called them to Galilee and he awakened their mission. He instilled great joy in their hearts. Therefore, they were alive again. We too must live again. We can overcome our deep depression and rise again. When the resurrection of Jesus Christ becomes our resurrection, we will have the courage to take on our mission. We are not strong enough to deal with our mission on our own, but He will give us power. He will anoint us with the Holy Spirit. We have to go to our wilderness. We have to go to our own Galilee. Please visit Galilee again. (C.202-209)

In conclusion, the preacher wants the congregation to experience the glory of God and go to Galilee like the women in today’s biblical texts. In this sense, the preacher connects two different worlds: the biblical context and the context of the congregation.

Church D: The great morning (Luke 24:1-12)

The core problem of the sermon is: “The unbelief of the believer” (D.81). For example, the women prepared spices and ointments to embalm the body of Jesus Christ. The preacher interprets this behavior as their unbelief of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (D.30-31). He/she goes on to say that when the women went into the tomb, the dead body of Jesus was not there, but they did not believe that He was risen from the dead (D.52-57). According to the angel’s testimony, they had heard several times from Jesus Christ about His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead when they were with Him in Galilee. The preacher interprets their reaction as the unbelief of the believer and the misunderstanding of the

resurrection of Jesus Christ. He/she gives the following explanation:

For example, let's look at the following well-known story. Jesus is very fond of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Lazarus died. His body was rotten and smelling. But Jesus said he would live. Martha replied, she knew he would be alive in the last day. She believed the resurrection. She knew it would happen. But the resurrection she believes is incomplete. She did not believe that her brother would be alive here and now. This demonstrates the misunderstanding of the resurrection. (D.87-92)

The preacher considers that the women have the same understanding of the resurrection as Mary and Martha, who are the sisters of Lazarus. Likewise, the preacher sees the congregants as also misunderstanding the resurrection, as the women did. Therefore, he/she asks the following question:

How do you understand the resurrection? What is the meaning of Easter Sunday for you? What power does Easter have for you? Does the resurrection of Jesus Christ become a foundation of power and hope in the suffering of your life? (D.94-96)

The preacher provides another reason for their reaction and a solution to their unbelief:

The angels told her to remember the words of Jesus Christ. Let's see verse 7: "That the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day". This is the important teaching concerning His life. He taught them that He would die on the cross and rise again from the dead. They could not remember what He said. In verse 8: "Then they remembered..." The women remembered the words of Jesus Christ and they ran and told it to His disciples. (D.115-120)

Two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus. Jesus was walking beside them, but they didn't know who he was. The risen Lord who put on a new body initiated a conversation with them. What was the conversation about? Verse 21: "But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place". Let's see verse 25: "He [Jesus] said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" Jesus explained the Word of God to them, as they slowly believed the words of the prophets. How did they react to the words of Jesus Christ? Verse 32: "They asked

each other, were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” ... When did their hearts burn? When He opened up and explained the Scriptures to them. The Word of God was given to them; it was revealed to them, their reasoning and their intelligence, and their hearts burned. At that time they began to realize the cross of Jesus Christ—his death and his sufferings. (D.139-153)

In this respect, the preacher views the problem in the present-day Korean Church as being that they walk along a different path—learning the Word of God, but living without the Word of God (D.134 -135).

In conclusion, the preacher wants to point out the misunderstanding of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and living without the Word of God. This is the problem of the women, the apostles, and of Christians today.

3.2.4. How does the preacher him/herself function in the sermon?

The question is about the preacher. Generally, most preachers have an understanding of who they are and what their role in the church is. John R.W. Stott (1982:135) says, “The Bible itself uses a variety of images to illustrate what a Christian preacher is”. Stott (1982:135-136) gives an explanation of the images of the preacher as follows: the herald or town crier, a sower, an ambassador, a steward or housekeeper, a pastor or shepherd and an approved worker in God’s sight.

Thomas G. Long identifies the following four prominent images/metaphors of the preacher: the herald, the pastor, the storyteller, and the witness. He briefly illustrates these as follows (Long 1989:23-47):

- **The herald image:** The herald preacher has one clear task with two parts: to attend to the message of the Bible and to proclaim it plainly.... Herald preachers do not attempt to defend Christian doctrine or to persuade people, they only speak the message.... Thus, the herald metaphor underscores the conviction that the primary movement of preaching is from God through the herald to the hearers.
- **The pastor:** The preacher discerns the needs of the hearers, we may say that the preacher diagnoses their needs, and then strives to be of help by intervening with the Gospel, by

speaking a word that clarifies and restores. The herald starts with the Bible as a source; the pastor starts with the human dilemma as experienced by the hearer and turns to the Bible as a resource. The pastor image implies that the preacher's relationship to the hearers—in terms of style, personality, character, previous experience, and so on—is a crucial dimension of the pastoral and therapeutic process.

- **The storyteller:** This image differs from the previous two in that it tells us who the preacher is by describing how the preacher preaches—by telling stories. The storyteller, they would say, can be just as attuned to the biblical message as the herald and, at the same time, just as sensitive to the human situation as the pastor. The storyteller refuses to divorce that content from the rhetorical form in which it is found. They are deeply concerned about communication and the listening process. The storyteller is convinced that the preacher's own life story is an indispensable resource for preaching. The storyteller image, like that of the pastor, places a premium upon the experiential dimensions of the faith. The goal of the storyteller is for something eventful to happen to the hearer in a sermon.
- **The witness:** The preacher as witness is not authoritative because of rank or power, but rather because of what the preacher has seen and heard. A witness testifies to events, and the event to which the preacher testifies is the encounter between God and us. The witness image carries with it guidance about the rhetorical form of preaching. The witness is not a neutral observer. The truth is larger than the witness's own experience of it.

Based on the above-mentioned images/metaphors, the researcher will discern the following aspects: how the preacher performs; what image the preacher portrays; and what identity the preacher has in the sermon.

Church A: People who met the resurrected Lord (Matthew 28:1-10)

This preacher represents the “pastoral” image. He/she describes the life of Mary Magdalene, and how she suffered before her encounter with Jesus Christ (A.23-24, 25-26, 33). The preacher asserts that the life of Mary and the life of modern men/women are not very different (A.30). In this respect, the preacher is interested in the needs of the hearers.

Therefore, the preacher encourages the hearers to meet Jesus Christ. The preacher hopes that

the hearers expect this to happen, resulting in a change and a miracle in their lives, as Mary Magdalene had experienced a miraculous change in her life after her encounter with Jesus Christ. This encouragement is based on understanding the needs of the hearers.

The preacher shows the image of a storyteller. He/she testifies to his/her own experience of ministering in a remote countryside from the city and planting a church, how difficult it was and how much his/her family suffered because of poverty and disease.

Finally, the preacher expects that the lives of the congregational members will be changed, as his/her life has changed. (A.226-228)

Church B: Lord of the resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10)

This preacher portrays the “herald” image. He/she says a lot, for example: “let’s see verse 2, ...let’s see verses 4 and 5, ...let’s see verses 6 and 7, ...let’s see verses 9 and 10, ...let’s see Numbers chapter 6, verses 26 and 27, ...let’s see Philippians chapter 4, verses 6 and 7, ...Revelation chapter 2, verse 2 says...” etc. In this respect, we can recognize how much the preacher tries to proclaim the message of the Bible plainly.

The preacher applies the words of Jesus Christ to the hearers: “Are you peaceful? Do not be afraid! Go to Galilee.” He/she says:

The life of the resurrection is within us. Jesus comes and asks us: “Are you peaceful? Don’t be afraid!” Even the world is going to change dramatically. You, do not be afraid of this, go to Galilee and build up a church. (B.211-213)

The preacher rebukes those who are not peaceful and are afraid of unexpected incidents, and who do not go to Galilee. He/she urges the hearers to change their attitude and behavior.

Church C: They will see me there (Matthew 28:1-10)

The image of this preacher is that of the “pastor”. As mentioned above, the preacher evaluates the Korean society as living under a collectively depressed state (C.104-105). This is a reasonable evaluation. How does the preacher evaluate Christians in the Korean Church? He/she evaluates that they pursue a good place and a comfortable place (C.134). They want a successful life. This is the nature of human beings. In this sense, we can recognize that he/she

tries to identify what the problems affecting the congregation are.

As a result of the above diagnosis, the preacher gives a biblical solution. The preacher proposes that the congregation experiences God's glory. He/she knows that Christians today want to experience the glory of God, which they once experienced. Therefore, the preacher invites them to the glory of God. They can finally overcome their slump in faith. Based on Long's explanation, the preacher demonstrates the image of the pastor.

Church D: The great morning (Luke 24:1-12)

This preacher encompasses the following two images: the "herald" and the "pastor". The preacher points out their inaccurate belief of the resurrection from today's biblical texts. This is not only their problem, but the problem of all Christians today. The preacher assumes that on Easter Sunday morning, most Christians go to the Sunday morning worship services, but they have a different point of view about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. According to the preacher, the cause of the problem is that they misunderstand the Word of God, and sometimes they live without the Word of God. The preacher finds the cause of the problem in the biblical text.

The preacher connects the biblical world and today's world. He/she asserts that the congregation and the current Korean Church have the same problems, which are: the unbelief of the believers, and living without the Word of God.

Therefore, the preacher wants to proclaim the Word of God plainly, while at the same time, he/she wants to deal with the important problem experienced by present-day Christians. In this sense, the preacher fulfills the roles of the herald and the pastor in the sermon.

3.3. Conclusion

In short, the researcher has analyzed the four selected sermons utilizing the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis. He intentionally utilized this method to discover the superficial and depth structure of the four sermons. Through this process, the aspects of exemplary, legalistic and moralistic messages are identified in the selected sermons and these messages can give rise to the problem of subordinating and manipulating the presence of God and

God's voice. To summarize the analysis of the selected sermons, the researcher will briefly look at which messages might cause problems.

As mentioned in section 2.4.4, the researcher found the conditional sentences in sermons A, B and C problematic. In this regard, Cilliers (2004:74) says: "The linguistic structure that generally indicates moralism, is *conditional syntax*". Furthermore, he adds the following:

Should the reality of salvation (God's presence and salvific words) be discussed in this way, the implication would be that God is changed into a Postulate, a Possibility expressed in unreal, conditional terms - and only activated by human actions (Cilliers 2004:74).

For example, in sermon A, the preacher assures the congregation that when we meet the Risen Jesus there will be a miracle in our lives, as it was for Mary Magdalene, the two presidents, and so forth. Therefore, the preacher pleads with the congregation to fix their eyes on Jesus in these dark days, like he does himself. According to Greidanus (Greidanus 1970:65), this kind of sermon is "anthropocentric preaching" and can be called exemplary preaching. He says: "Our preaching may not be preaching of Peter or Mary but must be preaching of Christ" (Greidanus 1970:65-66).

The other problem is found in 3.2.1, which deals with the image of God in the sermons. Cilliers (2004:76) asserts that many preachers quote Christological formulae and titles without making use of their evangelical quality. This also applies to the use of other images, names and predicates of God. In his opinion, all legalistic sermons initiate with God's current absence, and this empty place must be filled with the pious zeal of the *homo intactus* (unbroken human) (Cilliers 2004:78). The legalistic aspects can be found in the four selected sermons.

For example, in sermon A, the preacher says: "Please, believe in the Lord who will make a miracle in your life as he did in the life of President Rhee, President Lincoln, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and the preacher". What does a miracle imply? The persons mentioned are all successful people in this world. They have something in common; they have all overcome their pain and suffering. In this sense, their pious zeal replaces God's current absence.

In chapter 4, the researcher will deal with how the exemplary, legalistic and moralistic aspects manipulate the presence of God and subordinate God's voice.

CHAPTER 4:

NORMATIVE REFLECTION OF THE FOUR SELECTED SERMONS IN TERMS OF “GODLESS SERMONS”

4.1. Introduction

In chapters 2 and 3, the four selected sermons were analysed linguistically and homiletically. During this process, the superficial and depth structure of these sermons were distinguished. Furthermore, a better understanding was obtained of God, Scripture, the congregation, and the preacher of the each sermon. These comprise the basic elements of preaching.

As was mentioned in section 1.4, the research hypothesis postulates the preaching of godless sermons in the South Korean Presbyterian Church. This raises the question, “What is a godless sermon?” In this chapter, the researcher will endeavour to describe what a godless sermon is and will also analyse the ways of godless sermons in each of the four sermons.

4.2. “Godless sermons”: Legalistic, moralistic and exemplary messages

In chapter 1, the researcher mentioned that the phenomenon of God being eliminated on the pulpit has persistently occurred in the sermonic situation. This phenomenon of God missing in our sermons is the main motivation for this research. Here, the normative approach will be used to examine this phenomenon in more detail.

4.2.1. The core factor of preaching: God’s presence

What is preaching? This is not an easy question to answer because there are various ways to define it. For this reason, the researcher has rephrased the question as follows: “What is the core factor of preaching”? Craddock (1985:22ff) introduces the fundamental convictions of preaching focusing on the following four factors of the sermon: the preacher, the listeners, the Scriptures, and the Spirit of God. These four factors are generally accepted by most homileticians. Cilliers (2004:24) notes the four voices of preaching as follows: God, the biblical text, the congregation and the preacher. He provides the following explanation of preaching:

Preaching takes place when God's voice is heard through the voice of the text, in the voice of the time (congregational context), through the (unique) voice of the preacher. When these four voices become one voice, then the sermon is indeed *viva vox evangelii* (Cilliers 2004:32).

What is the *viva vox evangelii*? According to Luther, "God's voice in the scriptural text is the *viva vox evangelii*, the living voice of the Gospel" (Cilliers 2004:30). As was mentioned in section 1.1, God does not give his words to us directly. Instead, "We hear God's voice through the preacher's voice" (Müller 2013:3-4).

Among these four factors, what is the core factor of preaching? This question is not about a proportion but primacy. Cilliers (2004:41) says, "God's presence is all-important". This means that primacy of worship and preaching refers to the presence of God. Müller (2013:3) confesses, "The authority and power of preaching rests on the active presence of the living God, wherever his word is proclaimed". Bohren (1965:62) also mentions, "Preaching is an occurrence which has its origin in God". He goes on to confess, "What I need for preaching is the Holy Spirit" (Bohren 1980:66). Calvin (1960:580) says, "The Word becomes efficacious for our faith through the Holy Spirit... Accordingly, without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the Word can do nothing".

To summarize these claims, preaching has its origination in God—the beginning and the end—the secret of preaching resides in God's presence. According to Cilliers (2004:45), the secret of preaching is that God, during his presence, speaks to us. God, who calls us as a preacher, does not leave His ordained preacher alone in the world (Craddock 1985:30). It means that God is involved in the ministry of preaching. In addition, the sermon is the means by which the Word of God is preached through His ordained people to the world. The sermon is an act of hope because it is not empty human words. Sermons are much more than written words in a manuscript; it is the moment of mystery and the wonder of an encounter with God.

What shall we proclaim on the pulpit? The sermon participates in God's purpose, it is initiated by Christ and it is supported by the Holy Spirit (Buttrick 1987:456). According to Cilliers (2004:46), "God Himself will use the sermon to confirm that He who was, also is and will be". Preachers should proclaim God as a Person—who was, who is, and who always will be (cf. Matthew 28:20). The sermon is always about the preaching of the reality of the present

saving God, and of the works of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Cilliers 2004:53). In conclusion, God is the primacy and core factor of preaching.

4.2.2. What is a godless sermon?

What is the calling of a preacher? According to Cilliers (2004:45), the calling of the preacher is to point out His *praesentia realis dei*, the real presence of God in the Word. Theologically, preaching is not about proclaiming biblical texts but about proclaiming God as a Person. Furthermore, it is not merely the exegesis of a number of truths but it is the calling of God's name (Cilliers 2004:45). God Himself, who is called in our preaching, is present. However, the problem here is that the core voice of preaching, which is God's voice, and the core factor of preaching, which is God's presence, can be eliminated in our sermons.

This gives rise to the question, "What is a godless sermon?" A godless sermon, as defined by the researcher, is the absence of God's presence in our sermon/s. Consequently, due to the absence of God, this vacuum must be filled by a religious person, *homo religiosus* (Cilliers 2004:76,78). As a result of godless sermons, the sermon is filled with human-centered messages.

The problem is that unintentional anthropocentric messages have been proclaimed by many evangelical preachers (Chapell 2005:288). This is the sad reality of many preachers. Chapell (2005:288) provides the following examples of anthropocentric messages: "Five Steps to a Better Marriage," "How to Make God Answer Your Prayer," and "Achieving Holiness through the Power of Resolve". It is therefore implied that human efforts produce a better marriage, answers to prayer, and holiness. He adds, "No message is more damaging to true faith" (Chapell 2005:289). According to Cilliers (2004:77), an *anthropocentric reversal* takes place in this kind of sermon. Furthermore, this kind of sermon does not express God's reality and working in the here and now. Due to anthropocentric messages, God may be absent.

The basic structure of a godless sermon¹² is as follows:

¹² Cilliers (2004:78-80) calls this kind of sermon a legalistic sermon. Godless sermons are referred to in various ways, for instance, as a legalistic sermon, a moralistic sermon, or an exemplary sermon, as well as a human-centered sermon, an anthropocentric sermon and a biographical sermon. However, the researcher prefers the term "godless sermon" because God is absent in these kinds of sermons.

- (In the past) God did something.
- (In the future) God will or wants to do something.
- (In the present) We must do something (Cilliers 2004:78).

For example, Cilliers (2004:78-80) illustrates the absence of God in a sermon on Joshua 3:1-17 as follows:

In the history of Israel, when Israel was on the verge of crossing the river Jordan, the preacher finds a parallel with South Africa that faces an uncertain future, a future in which property, political power, the guarantees of employment opportunities and the progress of businesses are threatened. Against the background of these uncertain times, the congregation is called to trust in God, to acknowledge and accept Him, as they need God's "divine intervention," as in the case of Israel that had to cross the Jordan.

- In the past: God did something.

The preacher proclaims the miraculous working power of God among the people of Israel and emphasizes as like that "God cares ... rescues ... sets them on a new path".

- In the future: God will or want to do something.

How are you crossing your Jordan today? Is it alone? Is it by your own strength? God wants to go before you. God wants to lead you. God wants to help you.

- In the present: We must do something.

The Jordan story tells us what we must do.... What happens when you consecrate yourself to God? The Lord will do amazing things among you. So you see, my friends, when you commit your life to God that's precisely what you will see.

Furthermore, Cilliers evaluates the sermon as follows:

God must stand and wait in the sermon. God is eager to act, but does not do so because something must happen first. First, the audience must act. The congregation's present deeds stand between God's deeds in the past and in the future. The preacher interprets, albeit unconsciously, the present as a vacuum between God's deeds and his possibilities. The unbroken *homo religious* fills this vacuum (Cilliers (2004:79).

Joshua 3:5 reads as follows: “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you”. It means: consecrate yourselves because tomorrow the Lord will perform miracles among you. In the sermon, the cause of the text becomes the condition for His performing. The preacher changes the reason of the appeal for consecration into the result of consecration. The salvation of God in the text depends on Israel’s reaction. Israel’s reaction becomes a conditional action in the sermon. This is why the congregation must purify themselves. God’s great deeds are subordinated to those of humans. Does the Word of God really mean this? This is not the *viva vox evangelii*—the living voice of the Gospel—because God is to act passively in the sermon. Godless sermons manipulate the Word of God. Theologically, God takes the initiative in His pre-grace (Cilliers 2004:56, 77).

Without exception, the sad reality is that the phenomena of godless sermons are found in the Korean Presbyterian Church. Most of the missionaries who served the early Korean Church were affected by the Second Great Awakening.¹³ Thereby, the tradition of the Korean Church is mostly affected by the American Great Awakening. One significant influence is the emphasis on prayer. It is not particularly bad to emphasize prayer, but the problem is to highlight the response to prayer. As the old Korean proverb states, “Sincerity moves Heaven”. This proverb indicates the Korean sentiment.

In South Korea, there is a special prayer meeting held once a year at the church for college-entrance examinations, attended mostly by the parents of students. In general, the following themes come to the fore: “the response to prayer” and “the quantity of prayer” in sermons. These themes imply: when we pray more for our children, the possibility of God answering our prayers will be increased or He will answer more quickly. Many congregational members do not know that this is wrong. The “response to prayer” is something to think about. Does the response to prayer depend on God’s will or on our sincerity? Who can answer whether it is caused by our sincerity? Nevertheless, in a prayer meeting for test-taking students one preacher said, “As parents we have to pray harder for our children than before”. As a result of this message, parents think that if they do not fulfil the quota of prayer required, God is not likely to respond to their prayers. We have to pray for our children as parents, but the problem is that many Christian parents think that if they do not pray hard enough, God will

¹³ According to McGrath (2007:155), “One of the most distinctive features of North America Protestant Christianity is the phenomenon of the “Awakening”. To date, three Awakenings have been documented, each leading initially to religious renewal and subsequently to social change”.

not bless their children. Therefore, they harbour feelings of guilt about their children's college entrance-examination results. This reveals their reason for praying. Why do they pray? They pray to put God's blessing into operation. But it is not like that. Theologically, we as human beings cannot activate God's blessings and power. We cannot usurp God's power. Isaiah 65:1 reads: "I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, 'Here am I, here am I.'"

God governs the world according to His will, not according to our deeds. The Westminster Confession of Faith (cited by Williamson 1964:23) states the following:

God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them.

God has the unlimited ability to do whatever He wants. He is an omnipotent God. The Almighty God acts according His good pleasure and His own will. His power is on a totally different level than ours. The Almighty God is to be found everywhere at the same time because He is omnipresent. The Korean Presbyterian Church is grounded on the Westminster Confession of Faith. Preachers should proclaim what they believe, but the reality of the sermonic situation is very different. They preach the Almighty God as a passive God who is subordinate to the deeds of humans. They fill the absence of God with human piety and religious persons, *homo religiosus*, for their own ministries.

Indeed, God is pushed aside in a godless sermon by His ordained preachers. Luther called the phenomenon of this reality an *annihilatio Dei*. This problem is not a recent development, nor is it confined to the Korean Church. Cilliers (2004:81) gives the following example:

Rudolf Landau analysed a number of sermons on God's providence in Germany. He discovered that God is suppressed by human norms and a widespread *anthroponymic subordination* of God takes place. Cilliers states: The dogmatic topics of the *concursus Dei* or the *cooperatio Dei et hominum* (way in which God and humans "cooperate") is generally understood thus, or in any case expressed thus in language, that God's acts are

subordinated to the general morality of human acts.

According to Wilson (2010:41), “Sermons can be an event or encounter with God, not just information of abstraction about God”. God is an active agent in the text and is one of the Persons of the Trinity. To proclaim God, preachers have to adopt a multidimensional approach to the Scriptures because proclamation is the only reason for preaching (Wilson 2010:40). In this sense, Wilson (2010:42) points out the following problem with preacher’s: “Without asking, Where is God in or behind the biblical texts?, the preacher is likely to speed away on the sermon journey leaving God behind”. This preacher’s attitude brings the following problem, they put the burden of responsibility to improve an individual’s relationship with Jesus Christ on the congregation, for instance, we should, must, or have to do something (Wilson 2010:21). Of course, the congregation then stresses they must do something. We believe that God’s grace alone is what saves us. Self-reliance is a sure recipe for disaster (Wilson 2010:21). He expresses this phenomenon in our sermonic situation as follows: “God is missing in our sermon and God is absent from our sermons” (Wilson 2010:20-21). In fact, the phenomenon of a godless sermon can be found universally on the pulpit.

Once again, what is a godless sermon? To sum up, the core factors of preaching include God’s presence, as well as the following four factors: the voice of God, the voice of biblical texts, the voice of the congregation and the voice of the preacher. In order for our sermons to become the living voice of the Gospel, preachers should proclaim the living God—who was, who is, and who will always be—the present saving God, who is working as a Triune God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. When preachers do not properly proclaim God who works as the living present saving God and they substitute Him with human piety, God is eliminated in their sermons. This is definitely a “godless sermon,” which the researcher refers to in this study.

As discussed so far, the phenomenon of godless sermons can be found in the sermonic situation. This phenomenon should consider the following theological point of view: the human preacher cannot create God’s presence and manipulate God’s presence because He is indeed the Living God, and He alone is the self-existent God. Indeed, we cannot control God with our many words because God is greater than our sermons (Cilliers 2004:48).

Paradoxically, in a godless sermon, God becomes a cameo and plays a passive role without preachers and the congregation even knowing. Why does this happen? God is a paradox. The Scriptures testify to it. To the author of the book of Job in the Old Testament, “God is not a wholly rational God, but neither is God wholly irrational” (Capps 1990:166-167). Capps (1990:167) goes on to say:

God is a God of paradoxical intentions. To Job, before his encounter with God, God was inconsistent: one moment a friend, the next moment an enemy. But to say that God is inconsistent is to miss the deeper truth that God is, instead, a paradox.

Rudolf Otto (1959:117,190) points out that paradox is essential to the nature of God who is entirely incomprehensible and inaccessible to human reason, and that paradox, is the strange “beyondness” of God. Fundamentally, we preach a paradoxical God on the pulpit. Cilliers (2004:46) asks a mysterious question about preaching as follows: “How does a person speak about God so that He Himself speaks?” Preaching is a mystery event that is incomprehensible to human reason because we preach the mystery of the Gospel (Ephesians 6:19) and the mystery of God (Colossians 2:2).

Why do people come to worship? It is not an easy question but Long (2002:19) gives the following answer in his book: “We need God”. It means that people need to be in communion with God, to belong to God. Cilliers (2004:40) also says, “The Reformed justifiably call this core moment (of worship): an encounter with God”. He goes on to say that the hope of preaching is the presence of God. People come to worship because of God’s presence and to hear the living voice of God (Cilliers 2004:20). According to Webber (1992:5), this is the mystery of worship, in this sense, he points out the following problem we experience in our churches: “The mystery was gone because we so seldom experience awe and reverence in our churches”.

What is our responsibility as a preacher? Cilliers (2004:48) says that we as preachers have to kneel with our congregants before the mystery of God to expect God’s presence among us. How should we properly preach the living God who is greater than our sermons? The researcher will deal with this question in chapter 5. However, we cannot create the presence of God; therefore, should avoid the way of godless sermons in order to fulfil our responsibility as His ordained preachers.

4.2.3. The different types of godless sermons

So far, the researcher has examined various aspects of godless sermons. It was discovered that in godless sermons the uneliminative and unmanipulatable presence of God has been substituted by human efforts and piety. Homiletics have constantly pointed this out. Here, the researcher will discuss the different types of godless sermons. These are found in the following types of messages: moralistic, legalistic and exemplary messages.

4.2.3.1. *Moralistic messages: “Be good”*

The first typical example of a godless sermon is a moralistic sermon. The following questions come to the fore: Are moralistic messages wrong or bad? Is it erroneous to preach on the pulpit “be good and be holy”? Can you for sure say that it is biblically wrong? God commands us what to do and what not to do in Scripture. However, these question might be asked because we need to be enlightened whether a moralistic sermon is harmful to people. Chapell (2005:291) highlights the problem of moralistic messages as follows:

When the focus of a sermon becomes a moralistic “Don’t smoke or chew or go with those who do” (or even a more sophisticated “Renew your heart by doing what God commands”), listeners will most likely assume that they can secure or renew their relationship with God through proper behaviors.

If we do not identify the redemptive purpose of a biblical text, it is possible to say that we falsely preach and send all the wrong signals even if all our words are right. If listeners begin to believe and act as if they can gain God’s favour and kindness through their obedience and humility and by their own merit, then their basic confession of faith is fundamentally flawed. But our belief is aligned with the Westminster Confession of Faith which states, “We cannot, by our best works, merit pardon of sin, or eternal life, at the hand of God...” (cited by Williamson 1964:120). In addition, the Bible says that we are a totally doomed before God (Rom 3:10-11). Therefore, according to Chapell (2005:288,291), moralistic messages can be classified as a non-redemptive and non-gospel message, and according to Cilliers (2004:74), “The sad reality is that many preachers do not preach the Gospel of salvation and they change the Gospel into moralization”.

Chapell (2005:291) provides the following explanation of “be good” messages: “Similar to

focusing on biographies apart from enabling grace is an emphasis on behaviors alone that also results in non-redemptive messages”. In his opinion, these messages are typical of moralistic sermons. For example:

I witness this miscommunication almost daily as the top-rated radio station in our city broadcasts a “meditation” during the early morning. In each meditation, the preacher addresses a topic with a Bible verse or two. The subjects run the gamut from procrastination to care for children to honesty on the job. The station turns up the reverberation during the inspirational minute so that it sounds as though the words come directly from Mount Sinai. Not to pay attention seems like a sin. As the speaker reminds us to practice punctuality, good parenting, and business propriety. I imagine thousands of listening Christians are nodding their heads and saying in unison, “That’s right... that’s how we should live” (Chapell 2005:273).

More alarming, Chapell (2005:273) reports the following fact: “I have played tapes of these meditations to seminary classes and asked if anyone can discern error. Rarely does anyone spot a problem”.

Moralistic messages or sermons definitely subvert the confession of Christians. The presence of God and his salvific words are reversed in moralistic messages; we urge God to love us and to save us. This symptom can be found in the conditional sentences. The conditional syntax linguistically indicates moralism (Cilliers 2004:74). Additionally, Cilliers elaborates on this in more detail as follows:

Linguistically, such conditional sentences are expression of a more comprehensive phenomenon, i.e. that of conjunctive figures of speech. These figures of speech discuss realities as possibilities, and possibilities are postulated instead of realities in the form of the unreal (the so-called conjunctives irrealis). Should the reality of salvation (God’s presence and salvific words) be discussed in this way, the implication would be that God is changed into a Postulate, a Possibility expressed in unreal, conditional terms - and only “activated” by human actions (Cilliers 2004:74).

To sum up, moralistic messages do not declare God’s workings here and now. Moralistic messages proclaim “be good” messages to the congregation, rather than the living voice of the gospel. The factors of moralistic messages can be found among the conditional sentences.

Therefore, moralistic messages can be classified as a godless sermon.

4.2.3.2. Legalistic messages: “Be disciplined”

Legalistic messages look very similar to moralistic messages. Moralistic messages and legalistic messages are often used interchangeably. However, they are not the same and can be distinguished as follows: a moralistic sermon preaches the moral standards of human being, but a legalistic sermon preaches the law of biblical texts. Chapell gives a good explanation of legalism. He explains, legalistic messages exhort believers to improve their relationship with God through more diligent use of the means of grace (Chapell 2005:292). He elaborates:

Such messages do not merely advocate moral behavior but typically encourage believers to practice more regularly, sincerely, or methodically those disciplines that allegedly will lift them to higher planes of divine approval (or, if left undone, will reap divine displeasure) (Chapell 2005:292).

Therefore, legalistic messages are filled with “be disciplined” messages, such as: keep praying, read and meditate on the Bible more often, go to church and be more faithful in worship, be more faithful in your offerings, love your neighbour as yourself, and so on. Legalistic messages or “be disciplined” messages cause many believers to think as follows: “Our disciplines make us acceptable to God or earn us credit with him” (Chapell 2005:293). But this is not true.

For example, Cilliers notes:

In Luke 5:12-16, the preacher focuses on Jesus’ declaration in verse 13: “I am willing ... Be clean!” He translates this declaration as follows: “Brothers and sisters and young people, Jesus wants to cleanse us from all our sins, He wants to make us clean.” At first glance, this looks like a repetition of Jesus’ “willing” in the biblical text. Then, however, this follows: Won’t you follow the example of this man of the grave (the leper) this morning? Won’t you also come to Him if He wants to tell you this morning: ‘I am willing. Be clean’? Yes, come with your sin, come in your struggle, come in your weakness, but come to Jesus. That is the main issue, because as this man was cleansed, so you can also make peace with God this morning (Cilliers 2004:119).

The preacher says, “Come with your sin, come in your struggle, come in your weakness but come to Jesus”. It means that if we come to Jesus with our sin, our struggle and our weakness, He will clean us as the leper was cleansed. This is not the gospel. But, the preacher proclaims that our disciplines can make and provoke His merciful works. The problem is that when we think this way, we will be left as individuals alone with a biblical text that we must make true for ourselves, and the loneliest of all, is the preacher who is isolated.

Really, does the living God expect this of us? No! God does not expect us to do something to be saved.

In this case, the problem is not the biblical discipline we practice but the type of God we perceive. God becomes the ogre in the sky who requires the daily satisfaction of our toil to dispense his favor or restrain his displeasure (Chapell 2005:293).

When they preach Christian discipline in isolation from the grace that motivates, sanctifies, and secures, such an image necessarily emerges (Chapell 2005:293).

In fact, legalistic messages change God’s works either back to the past or ahead to the future (Cilliers 2004:170,171). For example:

An interesting example of this is a sermon on Acts 10, with the theme: “Divine appointment”. The preacher begins by relating his own encounter with Jesus: *“I had a divine appointment with the Lord Jesus Christ”*.

Then, while looking at the listeners: “God wants a divine appointment with you...” Who makes this appointment? Who keeps it? It seems that the preacher wishes to solve this question Christologically - evangelically - when he starts to talk fairly extensively about Christ as the “anointed One,” “compassionate One,” “suffering One,” “the risen One,” “ordained and exalted One” and “the Saviour for all mankind” - all predicates found in Acts 10. These titles, which truly express Jesus’ salvific work, all lose their power when the sermon continues to describe the possibility that Jesus will act should the listeners agree thereto. ... We hear: *“In the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ He wants to bless you this morning.... He wants to heal you this morning.... He wants to bless us, He wants to heal us, He wants to deliver us. He is able this morning to touch us. He is able this*

morning to love us.... Allow Him to love you. Allow Him to free you. Allow Him to heal you. Allow Him to encourage you. Allow Him to deliver you. ”

Jesus Christ must wait until the listeners keep the appointment, before He can do something (Cilliers 2004:120-121).

In this sermon, when we allow Him, Christ will love us, bless us and deliver us, and so on. Christ is willing to do so, but does not keep the “divine appointment”. He must wait until we allow Him. There is no one who intentionally preaches such an image of God who must wait for us to allow it. The present workings of God is dependent on our legalistic messages or “be disciplined” messages.

“The Reformers emphasis that the objective of preaching is our transformation, which takes place on the basis of God’s salvation in Christ and through the application of the reality of salvation through the Holy Spirit in and to, humans” (Cilliers 2004:171). This is not our responsibility as human beings, but our transformation remains God’s work. Our transformation is the primacy of God. He is the reason we live faithfully as Christians.

To sum up, preaching must declare God’s present workings without fail; who transforms us. Legalism promotes “be disciplined” messages. God does not work in legalistic messages thus there are no truly transforming powers working therein (Cilliers 2004:170). In this respect, legalistic messages are a kind of godless sermon.

4.2.3.3. Exemplary messages: “Be like”

Sermon titles such as “Caleb, man of Faith,” “Obedience of Noah,” “Abel’s sacrifice,” “Daniel and his three friends,” are not difficult to find in our sermon situations. These titles give the impression that we have to “be like” Caleb, Noah, Abel and Daniel. Chapell points this out as follows:

“Be like” messages focus the attention of listeners on the accomplishments of a particular biblical character and after identifying the exemplary characteristics of the character, preachers exhort listeners to be like that person in some commendable aspect of his or her personality or practice (Chapell 2005:289).

Greidanus (1970:65) says that in the English-speaking world, sermons constructed in this way have been named ‘biographical sermons,’ and according to him, this kind of preaching is ‘anthropocentric preaching’.

Cilliers (2004:116-117) gives an example of exemplary messages as follows:

In a sermon, which preaches the word Mark 5:25-34 - the woman who suffered from bleeding, her special faith and her “spark of hope” becomes the mirror in which we must measure the quality of our faith. The preacher says that:

“You must believe just like this woman...This morning you must seek more. You must not only seek Jesus for temporary salvation, but you must seek Him as an eternal treasure in your life.”

Her “problem...her faith...her fear” serve as an existential analogue to allow the listeners with their weak faith to come up to a standard.

The problem is that, “In this way the result, far from being Christocentric, can at best be Christological and anthropological, at worst, anthropocentric” (Greidanus 1970:67). Chapell (2005:290) retorts the following:

For instance, while many sermons exhort listeners to emulate David’s courage, wisdom, and love for God, such messages hardly present a full (or honest) picture of the shepherd kings life without mention of his adultery, murder, and faithlessness. Were we to ask David whom believers should emulate, can we imagine that his answer would be, “Me”?

What does this mean? David does not think of himself as an exemplary person. If this is true, how do we exhort congregants to be like him? Therefore, when we exhort David’s courage, wisdom and love of God, we have to make sure that the source of any holy trait is God’s grace (Chapell 2005:290). If we fail, exemplary sermons inescapably cause another problem.

The problem is that “be like” messages misjudge the historical text and therewith dishonour Scripture, because the fragmentary interpretation extracts the Bible “saint” from the total context of redemptive history (Greidanus 1970:69). For example, as stated by Greidanus,

Abraham, will also be found in the Koran, the Talmud, the Book of Mormon, the writings of the Church Fathers.... Why do we pretend to preach from the Bible when the Koran serves the purpose equally well? (Greidanus 1970:69).

How can we answer his question? We ardently confess “*sola Scriptura*” in theory, but it barely functions in the practice of exemplary messages (Greidanus 1970:70). Eventually, exemplary messages or “be like” messages make the Scriptures useless (Cilliers 2004:81).

To sum up, Christ is not truly necessary in exemplary preaching and holy exemplary characters replace Him. The destructive “be like” messages in sermons presume that people are able to obey God’s law if they truly want to do so and try hard enough (Cilliers 2004:168; Chapell 2005:289-290). We can never do this even though we want to do so. We do not need an exemplary model, except for Jesus Christ and the gospel.

4.3. Examination the four selected sermons in terms of godless sermons

The four selected sermons have already been analysed by utilizing the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis. Here, the researcher seeks to discern what makes the four selected sermons ‘godless sermons’.

4.3.1. Church A: Be like Mary Magdalene

A hint of an exemplary message is found in this sermon. As we saw earlier (2.4.1 & 2.4.5), the preacher clearly states that he/she intentionally emphasizes Mary Magdalene, rather than the resurrected Jesus Christ. In this sense, the preacher poses the following question to the congregants: “Who is Mary Magdalene?” (A.23) His/her explanation about Mary can be summarized as follows: Mary Magdalene was possessed by seven demons. Because of this, she lived a life lower than that of an animal, and many people despised her. Then she met Jesus Christ. He healed her and the seven demons left. From then onwards, Mary followed Jesus, even to the cross where He died. According to today’s biblical texts, she went to the grave of Jesus Christ.

After providing this description of her, the preacher points out the following example. “It is not easy to meet people of high status” (A.40). For example, when we want to meet the

president of the United States, it does not go as we wish. What is the preacher's intention? He/she wants to highlight the meeting between Mary and Jesus.

The preacher says: "It is surprising that Jesus met Mary before He met His disciples" (A.43-44). There is a meaning in the meeting with Mary and Jesus, but also, Jesus met Mary first. By comparing Mary and the disciples, the preacher insinuates that there is a difference between them.

The preacher says: "Dear brothers and sisters! She is different from most people" (A.47). This arouses their curiosity. What is the difference between them? The preacher goes on to say: "Many left Jesus Christ but she did not leave Him. Mary followed Jesus all the way, even to the cross and the grave. Jesus gave Mary His hand when she came to see Him and poured perfume on Him" (A.48-50). According to the preacher, the uniqueness of Mary is to follow Jesus to the end.

The preacher does not directly instruct his/her congregants to be like Mary Magdalene, but he/she creates the expectation that those who followed Jesus to the end will be blessed like her. Furthermore, the preacher emphasizes his/her point by making use of other stories, such as the story of the first President of South Korea, the story of the President Lincoln, the story of the miracle of South Korea, the story of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the preacher's own story.

As mentioned in section 2.5, the preacher once again expects the same miracle to happen—an encounter between the resurrected Jesus and the church members. In addition, as mentioned in section 3.2.3, the preacher expects his/her congregants to rely on God because they come from the same socio-economic background as Mary. Finally, as mentioned above (4.2.3), this serves as a typical example of an exemplary message because the preacher presents Mary as an exemplary model.

As a result, because of this exemplary message, the congregation is captivated by the foolish delusion that they might experience a miracle when they faithfully follow Jesus Christ to the end. The preacher proclaims the Almighty God as a passive God who is subordinate to our deeds as follows: when we live like Mary, He will bless our lives. In this respect, it can be

evaluated as follows: God is eliminated from the sermon and the voice of God is subordinate to the voice of the preacher.

4.3.2. Church B: Be peaceful, do not be afraid, and go to Galilee

As mentioned in section 2.4.3, the preacher expects the congregants to be peaceful and not to be afraid, despite the occurrence of unexpected incidents in their lives, and to overcome any difficulty as well as cope with their mission. According to the previous analysis, this is the aim of the sermon. This aim is based on the words of Jesus Christ as follows: “Are you peaceful? Do not be afraid. Go to Galilee” (Matthew 28:9-10). In fact, these are the words the resurrected Jesus spoke to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Nevertheless, the preacher proclaims the words of Jesus to bring discipline, which the congregants must follow. In other words, the preacher uses the same pattern to apply the words of Jesus to the congregants.

In the first phase, the preacher explains under what circumstances Jesus said these words to the women. For example, the preacher lists the following unexpected incidents: A violent earthquake (B.15-20), the appearing of an angel of the Lord (B.20-21), the dead body of Jesus was gone (B.35), and encountering the resurrected Jesus (B.39-47). Because of these, the women were nervous. The preacher asks: “Who can be peaceful in this situation? Who can be peaceful when unexpected events occur?” (A.49) This means that they were not peaceful. In this sense, Jesus asked them: “Are you peaceful?”

In the second phase, the preacher asserts that the words of Jesus should be applied in our lives as disciplines. For example, the preacher explains how we should respond to the words of Jesus, “Are you peaceful?” The preacher says:

My children, my job and my business do not go the way I expect it to, just as the women did not imagine the unexpected incident in today’s biblical texts would happen. At that time, Jesus asked: “Are you peaceful?” How should we respond to the question? (A.108-110)

He/she gives the following right reaction:

How should we react here? The reaction to kneel before the Lord must take place in our daily life. Yes! You are right. I am peaceful. The Lord of peace is within me. This is how

we should respond. If we don't respond like Mary Magdalene, we will someday hear his reproach. (A.115-118)

This means that we as Christians should be peaceful in any situation. The preacher imposes this discipline on his/her congregants.

In the third phase, the preacher warns that if we are not disciplined, we will be subject to reproach from God. For example, the preacher says:

When we live in the world, we will realize that everything would not go according to our expectation. Our life does not go as expected. At that time, we doubt. Are we redeemed? Are we children of God? What I want to say when we continue to doubt is that we forsake our first love. (A.125-128)

When Jesus asks us, "Are you peaceful?" our response should be "Yes". If you are not peaceful, the answer is "No". If your answer is "No," you forsake your first love, like the Ephesus Church did (Revelation 2:2). The preacher warns as follows: if we forsake our first love, Jesus will come to us and remove our lampstand from its place, like the Ephesus Church. This caution makes us follow the words of Jesus Christ as disciplines.

To sum up, the preacher uses the words of Jesus as disciplines in this way. Therefore, this sermon has aspects of the "be disciplined" message, which can be called legalistic messages. As mentioned in section 3.2.1, this sermon has "be like" messages, which can be called exemplary messages. As a result of the "be disciplined" and "be like" messages, the congregation is captivated by the foolish delusion that when they are peaceful, when they are not afraid, and when they go to Galilee, God will admit that they are faithful. Eventually, the works of the living God should be captivated by human deeds and as mentioned above in section 4.2.3, it seems that our disciplines make us acceptable to God, and vice versa.

4.3.3. Church C: Be disciplined like Mary

This sermon takes the form of a so-called three-point sermon. As mentioned in chapter 2 (2.4.2), the sermon consists of three main points of development and each point has its own conclusion as follows: Christians must experience the glory of God. After experiencing the glory of God, our lives will be changed like that of Mary Magdalene, Abraham, and Elijah.

We have to go to Galilee because the resurrected Lord went to Galilee rather than Jerusalem.

The first point of the sermon is as follows: the preacher presents Mary Magdalene as the main heroine (C.21-22). Why does heroine Mary go to the grave? The preacher says that people choose a thing that they like and have an interest in. Mary was fixated on Jesus Christ (C.26-28). That is why she went to the grave.

When Mary went to the tomb, an earthquake took place, an angel came down and his face shone like lightning, and he spoke to Mary. The preacher interprets this situation that Mary experienced as the glory of God. Here, the preacher considers her experience of God's glory as an answer from God, which was the result of Mary's deeds and attitude. In this sense, the preacher says: "God manages birth, old age, sickness, death, fortune and misfortune, happiness and misery, joy and anger, sorrow and pleasure. He organized these things according to people's faith, as they dream, as they plant, and as they wish" (C.40-42). The beginning of the sentence acknowledges the initiative of God, but then simultaneously towards the end of the sentence, the omnipotent God is captured by the human's faith, dreams and wishes.

The preacher notes the following testimony of a woman:

This morning, someone gave their firstfruits to God. These firstfruits have a complicated story. Someone has a son who became a doctor after eighteen years. She went through many hardships as a mother. She spent money for him equivalent to the cost of a few houses. Her son tried to kill himself. When she prayed for her son, she saw Jesus, who came to her as a bright light. After she experienced this, her son passed an examination to become a doctor. Therefore, she gave the firstfruits to God. Consider how impressed she is? For decades she prayed for her son, and the Lord saw her tears and heard her prayers. After she saw the glory of Jesus Christ, she was sure that her son would soon become a doctor. (C.56-63)

In this testimony, the preacher emphasizes that when the woman prayed for her son, she saw Jesus, who came to her as a bright light.

The preacher concludes the first point of the sermon as follows:

Dear brothers and sisters, the angel from heaven appeared to Mary, their face shone like light, and their clothing was as white as snow. Mary was very frightened but she was filled with great joy. Therefore, when we hear the Word of God, when we praise the Lord, when we live by faith, we have to see the glory of God. (C.65-68)

The conclusion of the second point is that, “After experiencing the glory of God, our lives will be changed like Mary Magdalene, Abraham, and Elijah” (as mentioned in section 2.4.2).

To sum up, the preacher seems to impose that his/her congregants have to see and experience the glory of God as a discipline. Here, the congregation cannot avoid the delusion that they are able to see and experience the glory of God by themselves. Is this really a wrong imagination? Indeed, the glory of God cannot be caused by the good deeds of humans or human piety. However, in the sermon, God’s great deeds are subordinate to the deeds of humans. Furthermore, he/she presents Mary, Abraham and Elijah as an exemplary model to them (as mentioned in section 2.4.4).

4.3.4. Church D: Because of God’s works

As mentioned previously (cf. 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.5, 3.2.3), the preacher identifies the following problem in Luke 24:1-12: The unbelief of the believers (D.81). The women went to the tomb with spices and ointments to embalm the body of Jesus Christ. Two men indicated that several times Jesus had told them about His death and resurrection when they were with Him in Galilee. This is why the preacher interprets their attitude and behaviour as the misunderstanding and unbelief of the resurrection. This is not only their problem but also the problem of the apostle’s, as well as the problem of Christians today.

In this respect, the preacher asks the congregants the following:

How do you understand the resurrection? What is the meaning of Easter Sunday for you? What power does Easter have for you? Does the resurrection of Jesus Christ become a foundation of power and hope in the suffering of your life? Or do you understand the resurrection like Martha did? (D.94-97)

The preacher finds the following reason for the problem of the women:

What did the angels tell her that reminded her? “Remember what he told you back in Galilee”. The problem is forgetting the words of Jesus. The gap between our faith and our life is the result of separating the Word of God from the reality of life. This is the most difficult problem in a Christian’s life. The problem is that the Word of God has not become the power of our life. ... He (Jesus) taught them that He would die on the cross and rise again from the dead. They could not remember what He said. (D.109-111, 117-119)

After speaking to the two men, the women remembered the words of Jesus Christ and they ran and told to His disciples. The two men reminded them of the words of Jesus Christ.

The preacher gave another example: Two of Jesus’ followers were walking to the village of Emmaus. Jesus was walking beside them, but they did not know it was Him. Then Jesus explained the Word of God to them. As a result, they slowly believed the Word of God. According to Luke 24:32, “They asked each other, Were not our heart burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

To sum up, the misunderstanding and the unbelief of the Word of God is a serious problem. How can we overcome this problem? What does the preacher suggest to overcome this problem? When the resurrected Lord explains the Scriptures to us we will understand the Word of God and begin to realize the cross of Jesus Christ, His death, and His resurrection. The preacher suggests that it is the only way to know the Word of God.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (cited by Williamson 1964:9-10) states the following, “We acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word”. The Korea Presbyterian Church stands on this Confession. In fact, we cannot fully understand the Word of God without the inward illumination of the Spirit of God, as we confess. The preacher also points out our responsibility to live within the Word of God. In the sermon, this is the basic attitude of Christians.

As mentioned in section 4.2.2, the basic structure of a godless sermon is as such: (in the past) God did something, (in the future) God will or want to do something, (in the present) we

must do something. However, in this sermon, (in the past) Jesus explained the Word of God to them, (in the present) the Spirit of God explains the Word of God to us, (in the future) God will provide an explanation of the Word of God to the next generation. The congregation can expect the inward illumination of the Spirit of God while hearing the Word of God. In this respect, the sermon can be evaluated as follows: the sermon rightly expresses the work of God in the here and now.

The purpose of this sermon is edification because the preacher mainly deals with the problem of the unbelief of the believers. According to Jay Adams (1982:147), “All edificational preaching, to be Christian, must fully take into consideration God’s grace in salvation and in sanctification”. Edificational preaching tends to end legalistically and moralistically. However, the sermon is not weighted towards “be disciplined” and “be good” or “be like” messages. Finally, the congregants will expect God’s mercy and grace because only God can make us understand the Word of God rather than them fulfil the requirements of Scripture on their own.

4.4. Conclusion

As was mentioned in section 1.5, this thesis consists of two main frameworks, sub-divided into four phases. The first framework includes the first two phases of the research, made up of chapters 2 and 3. The first half of the research analyses the four selected sermons using the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis. The second framework includes the last two phases of the research, made up of chapters 4 and 5. The latter half focuses on the following issues: the occurrence of godless sermons, how godless sermons happen, and possible ways to overcome these.

In the beginning of the latter half, the researcher examines what preaching is in light of the four factors of preaching. Homiletically, the core factor of preaching is God’s voice. Therefore, the problem of godless sermons is a serious issue.

An important question here is, “What is a godless sermon?” To recap, it can be explained as follows:

Preacher should proclaim the living God—who was, who is, and who will always be—the present saving God, who is working as a Triune God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. However, when preacher do not properly proclaim God who works as the living present saving God and he/she substitutes Him with human piety, God is eliminated in sermon. Finally, the sermon is filled with anthropocentric messages. (cf. Cilliers 2004:74-83).

This phenomenon as described above defines what a godless sermon is.¹⁴

The following types of messages provoke the phenomenon of godless sermons: legalistic, moralistic and exemplary messages. Here, some people ask the following question: “What can we do not to preach the above mentioned messages?” This question aims to separate the wheat from the chaff. This is not a problem of good or bad. The research does not discuss this. Additionally, the researcher seeks to explain the results and characteristics of legalistic, moralistic and exemplary messages, and furthermore, how godless sermons happen. In other words, the researcher does not oppose the preaching of legalistic, moralistic and exemplary messages in the biblical texts, but finds godless sermons problematic, which provokes the phenomenon because preachers present these messages the wrong way.

For example, sermon D preaches edificational messages, but the present saving God is properly preached. On the other hand, the present saving God is not properly preached in sermon A, B and C because they carelessly turn God’s great works into the piety and deeds of humans.

Chapell (2005:294) mentions, “Christ-centered preachers do not hesitate to present the moral imperatives the Lord demands”. He goes on to say, “Challenges to holiness must be accompanied by a Christ focus” (Chapell 2005:294). In addition, he warns that if we fail, we will promote only human-centered preaching, which is doomed to fail (Chapell 2005:294). He highlights the wrong way of preaching moral imperatives. What is the wrong way? This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

The following chapter will provide a comprehensive assessment of the selected sermons in

¹⁴ This understanding of ‘godless sermons’ is based on the idea of Johan Cilliers in *The living voice of the Gospel: Revisiting the basic principles of preaching* (Cilliers 2004:74-83).

terms of godless sermons. Suggestions will be made on how to overcome godless sermons in the light of the four basic voices of preaching.

CHAPTER 5:

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SOUTH KOREAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

5.1. Introduction

To recap so far, the researcher analysed and assessed the four selected sermons by using the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis (cf. chapter 2 and chapter 3). After analysing these sermons, the researcher discovered what constitutes a godless sermon. The researcher also referred to the characteristics of godless sermons, which are composed of moralistic, legalistic and exemplary messages. Among the sample of selected sermons, some manifest the aspects of a godless sermon, while others do not (cf. chapter 4). Based on the above reflections, in this chapter the researcher will consider how to overcome the phenomenon of godless sermons. The following discussion will focus on the comprehensive assessment of the selected sermons in light of the four basic voices of preaching.

5.2. Comprehensive assessment of the four selected sermons in terms of godless sermons

In chapter 4, the researcher identified what a godless sermon is. Furthermore, the phenomenon of godless sermons was examined, particularly among the four selected sermons, and why this occurs. These comprehensive assessments will be based on superficial analyses because of the barriers in understanding the circumstances of each church. Therefore, the following comprehensive assessments will be broad because of focusing on the obvious facts, which the preachers do not thoughtfully consider when preparing a sermon. Furthermore, the researcher will comprehensively organize the assessments of these sermons, even if there is an exceptional sermon.

5.2.1. The anthropocentric nature of the sermons

Preaching is not merely about proclaiming the biblical texts. Calvin (Inst 1.7.4) says, “God in person speaks in Scripture”. It is true that in Scripture we hear the voice of the Person of God speaking, *Dei loquentis persona*. Cilliers (2004:45-46) states, “We do not worship a Book, but God, the Living God of the Book”. In other words, theologically, we do not proclaim the Scripture, but the Living God. The Scripture mediates God’s voice as *viva vox evangelii*.

Indeed, the sermon is not merely the exegesis of a number of truths but it is the calling of God's Name (Cilliers 2004:45). Therefore, we should listen carefully to Wilson's (2010:21) caution: "For preaching to change, preachers need to get God in the viewfinder of the video recorder as they prepare their sermons".

Preaching should be theocentric. As mentioned in section 4.2.1, the core factor of preaching is God's presence. Cilliers (2004:45) points out that the secret of preaching is God who speaks to us during His presence in our sermon. Willimon (1981:76) notes, "God is the center of the Bible's concern". We preach the Word of God and the Word of God is theocentric. For this reason, the function of the sermon is not merely to instruct people on what they ought to do or be (Willimon 1981:76). According to Willimon,¹⁵ moralistic preaching is in conflict with theocentric preaching. Greidanus (1970:225) also insists that "Christocentric"¹⁶ preaching conflicts with anthropocentric and biographic preaching. However, the sermon should reflect theocentric preaching, not anthropocentric preaching.

To sum up the previous analysis of the four selected sermons, there are anthropocentric tendencies among sermons A, B and C. As mentioned in section 4.3, these sermons contain legalistic, moralistic and exemplary messages, which can make our sermons into godless sermons. According to Adams (1982:146), these kinds of messages ignore the grace of God and replace the work of God with human deeds. Wilson points out the problem of the moral sense in practice. Furthermore, he notes that anthropocentric preaching obviates what God has done for us in the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ (Wilson 2001:109). Godless sermons do not seem to be theocentric preaching. In conclusion, due to the aspects of godless sermons in the four selected sermons, these sermons are considered anthropocentric preaching.

5.2.2. The problem of the lack of biblical exegesis¹⁷

Preaching is grounded on the Word of God. Adams (1982:19) warns that the preacher must preach the Word rather than their own notions and opinions. Similarly, Wilson (2001:9) notes

¹⁵ Willimon (1981:76) insists that moralistic preaching invariably prevents God's grace into a human achievement.

¹⁶ Greidanus (1970:224) mentions that "Christocentric" should not be confined to the person of Christ or narrowed down to "Jesucentric", because the triune God allows of no division. That is why, in his opinion, Christocentric preaching is as broad as theocentric preaching.

¹⁷ According to Long (1989:60), "Broadly speaking, exegesis is a systematic plan for coming to understand a biblical text".

that preaching needs to be biblical in order to revitalize our sermons. As mentioned above, preaching proclaims God rather than the biblical text. However, we proclaim God from the biblical texts. Therefore, according to Cilliers (2004:99ff), listening to the voice of the biblical text is also the secret of preaching.

Wilson (2001:11) insists that preachers need to recover the God sense¹⁸ of Scripture. Their reading of the biblical text for the purpose of preaching needs to be a creative process, which uses theological imagination to communicate God, God's actions in the past and present, and the promise of God's actions in the future. He further states that when preachers read the Bible historically, literally and theologically, they will discover things in the text that they did not see before, and will thereby be enabled to preach in creative and powerfully new ways that serve the gospel and engage the congregation (Wilson 2001:7). This kind of biblical exegesis guides us to reach the God Sense in Scripture.

The route from the Scripture to preaching is an old and difficult one (Craddock 1979:120). Long (1989:58) points out that reliable biblical exegesis and preaching requires time, study and hard work. One recent problem of preaching is an 'unpreached' Bible (Cilliers 2004:99). Cilliers (2004:99) points out that if the voice of the biblical text is not heard in the sermon, it is not preaching. Cilliers (2004:99) estimates the sermonic situation in South Africa as follows: "An alarming percentage of the current preaching in South Africa could be typified as textless sermons". Similarly, Craddock (1985:27) also warns, "Sermons not informed and inspired by Scripture are objects dislodged, orphans in the world, without mother or father".

Jung (2012:69) points out that the overwhelming trend in the current Korean Church is that sermons are not faithful to the biblical text. He (Jung 2012:70-71) illustrates this with the following example of the strange silence of the biblical text in the South Korean sermonic situation:

First, the biblical text is not used in the sermon (Jung 2012:70). In this case, sermons are filled with irrelevant content that replaces the biblical text. Among the four selected sermons, sermon A belongs to the first case. As mentioned in section 2.4.3, the preacher fills the

¹⁸ According to Wilson (2001:68), "The God sense of a biblical text may be defined as those dimensions of it that speak of God's nature, acts, and relationship to humanity and creation, and that enable the Bible to be read as Scripture, the book of the church".

sermon with the following stories: the story of the first President of South Korea Syngman Rhee; the story of President Lincoln; the story of the miracle of South Korea; the story of Aleksandra Solzhenitsyn, a Russian novelist; and the story of the preacher. These stories do not have any relevance to Matthew 28:1-10.

Second, the biblical text is not properly used in the sermon (Jung 2012:70). This happens when the preacher interprets the biblical text incorrectly because he/she is inexperienced in the exegesis of the text. Among the four selected sermons, sermon A and B belong to the second case (as mentioned in section 3.2.2). In sermon A, the preacher interprets that Jesus loved Mary Magdalene more than His disciples. In addition, he fails to mention the other Mary. In sermon B, the preacher says that the Lord went to Galilee to build up a church but there is no evidence to support this interpretation.

Third, is the abuse of the Bible (Jung 2012:71). It means that preachers intentionally manipulate the biblical text to communicate their own opinion and/or arguments. The Bible becomes a tool/supplementary data to support the preacher's own opinion. Among the four selected sermons, sermon B and C belongs to the third case (as mentioned in sections 2.4.4 and 3.2.2) In sermon B, the preacher uses Revelation 2:4 and 3:1 to support his/her own opinion and argument. In sermon C, the preacher interprets that Jesus went go Galilee because there poor people such as tax collectors, prostitutes, widows and orphans, can be found.

Why does the phenomenon of 'textless' sermons and the strange silence of the text in the selected sermons occur? Cilliers (2004:101) explains that moralistic messages result when preachers deviate from the biblical text too soon, or perhaps they never truly visit the Bible. As a result, godless sermons among the selected sermons (as mentioned in sections 4.3.2, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3) seem to be generated by the lack of biblical exegesis.

5.2.3. The tendency to move easily from the biblical texts, to application, to the congregations

The application of the biblical text is an important topic in the field of homiletics. The Reformers emphasized that the aim of preaching is transformation (Cilliers 2004:171). Calvin points out that without application of a passage of Scripture to the congregation it is not

preaching (Parker 1992:79). Wilson (2010:48), a contemporary homiletician, states, “Every effective sermon must have relevance and address a need in the lives of the congregation”. Indeed, biblical texts tell of God’s salvific story and His self-revelation. Preachers are called to repeatedly preach God’s self-revelation and meditate His merciful salvific presence for our transformation (Cilliers 2004:109). As a result, preaching should be relevant for everyday believers who have to live in the world (Campbell & Cilliers 2012:118).

According to Cilliers (2004:110), on the one hand, the task of applying biblical texts can be described as a bridge between two worlds—the world of the antique biblical text and the world of present-day listeners. In other words, an appropriate application during the process of passing the Word of God to the congregation is essential. In this sense, what is required of preachers is the following knowledge: his/her exegesis of both Scripture and the congregation (Robinson 1980:27).

However, Robinson (1980:28) warns, “Inappropriate application can be as destructive as inept-exegesis”. According to Cilliers, the following typical inappropriate applications may occur in our sermonic situations:

First, the biblical text of today says to us as like... (Reduction of the meaning of the text to a general principle or truth)

Second, applied to our situation, the biblical text means as like... (Prescriptive application of the truth onto human lives)

Third, therefore, we should or must... (Admonition for new action)
(Cilliers 2004:110)

Cilliers (2004:110) evaluates the above paradigms of inappropriate applications as follows: “This is the usual stereotype moralistic concomitant supplementation”. He further notes that it is a timeless practice/application.

The above paradigms of inappropriate applications can be found among the selected sermons. Sermon A roughly corresponds to the second case because, as mentioned in sections 2.4.2, 2.5 and 3.2.3, the preacher brings the story of Mary Magdalene to the sermon as an application of the truth to the lives of humans. Sermon B is consistent with the first case because, as mentioned in sections 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.5 and 3.2.3, the preacher diminishes the

words of Jesus Christ to general principles, which we have to follow as norms and instructions. Lastly, sermon C is associated with the third case because, as mentioned in section 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 2.5 and 3.2.3, the preacher urges the congregation to go to Galilee as a new behaviour because the resurrected Lord went to Galilee rather than Jerusalem. This is not a precise distinction, but a possible analysis.

According to Cilliers (2004:144), preachers often think that they know their congregants and their circumstances well. The appropriate application demands time, attention and sensitivity for understanding people and their circumstances, as well as the biblical texts. The reason is because the gap in time, culture and context between the biblical world and present world are simply too great to be continued. In other words, the preachers do not give sufficient time, attention and sensitivity to fully understand the two very different worlds, and as a result, fail to appropriately apply the biblical text to their congregations.

5.2.4. Conclusion of the comprehensive assessments

To sum up, sermons become ‘godless sermons’ because of legalistic, moralistic and exemplary messages. These messages are the result of inefficient biblical exegesis and inappropriate application. Finally, preachers unintentionally transform their sermons into anthropocentric preaching instead of theocentric preaching.

Jay Adams (1982:147) notes, “If we preach a sermon that would be acceptable to the member of a Jewish synagogue or to a Unitarian congregation, there is something radically wrong with it”. A textually accurate discussion of biblical commands does not guarantee a Christian sermon. Exhortations for moral behaviour apart from the work of the Saviour degenerates into mere Pharisaism, even if preachers promote actions with selected biblical evidence and good intent (Chapell 2005:274). Therefore, godless sermons are not Christian sermons.

What can we do to avoid godless sermons? What makes a theocentric sermon? Christian sermons should be distinguished from those of other religions. Greidanus (1970:147) strongly states, “The Koran, the Book of Mormon, and other literature may mention the same persons, but only in the Bible do they appear in the context of the great battle initiated by the triune God to redeem his people and to advance his Kingdom till God shall be all and in all”. Adams (1982:147) insists that what distinguishes our sermons is the all-pervading presence of the

salvific deeds and sanctifying work of Christ. Indeed, we as a preacher must proclaim the works of the Triune God (Cilliers 2004:53). However, this is not possible without considering biblical texts to proclaim the works of the Triune God. Therefore, proper biblical exegesis should be appropriately applied to sermons.

5.3. Practical suggestions for the South Korean Presbyterian Church in the light of the four basic voices of preaching

Here, the researcher will consider practical suggestions on how to overcome godless sermons. The following practical suggestions will be based on the basic voices of preaching, which has already been discussed in section 4.2.1. This is the first limitation of the practical suggestions.

The second limitation is that all suggestions will be based on the above-mentioned comprehensive assessments. These problematic symptoms (5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3) generate legalistic, moralistic and exemplary messages, which in turn create godless sermons. The research has not identified any positive aspects of the selected sermons because the focus has been on the phenomenon of godless sermons in the South Korean Presbyterian Church.

5.3.1. The sermons should be theocentric

The first voice of preaching is the voice of God. Greidanus (1990:10) notes:

God himself is present in our preaching; God speaks in our preaching; God acts in and through our preaching. God uses our preaching to pass on His gospel, to bring His salvation today, to build His church, to extend His kingdom.

In this regard, the core factor of preaching is God's voice. Therefore, our sermons must reflect theocentric preaching rather than anthropocentric preaching, and the aim of preaching is the glory of God. What makes our sermons theocentric?

What should preaching encompass for our sermons to be theocentric? As mentioned already, preaching should proclaim God rather than biblical texts and God must be distinguished from the gods of other people/religions. In other words, Christian sermons should be distinguished from those of other religious instructions. But what distinguishes our God? This is the

fundamental question of Christianity. In other words, this suggests the direction of preaching in Christianity. The first is that our God exists as the Triune God. That is why the Triune God should be proclaimed on the pulpit. The second is that our God is the present saving God. For this reason God's redemptive works (of the past, present and future) should be preached in the sermon.

First, our God is the Triune God. The Westminster Confession of Faith (cited by Williamson 1964:26) states, "In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power and eternity; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost". This describes the manner in which God exists. It means that, "This one God exists in three distinct Persons, that each of these three Persons is Just God (not parts of God), and that these three equal Persons have personal distinctions one from the other" (Williamson 1964:26).

Christians confess that there is only one living and true God. Preaching must therefore proclaim the living and true God, who exists as the Triune God. Nevertheless, Wilson (1995:83) points out the following problem: "Preachers are often tempted to think that we are preaching about a doctrine, or a truth, or a story, or a biblical text, and they forget the more basic focus, that we are preaching God". Therefore, we as preachers keep the Triune God in the centre of our sermons, instead of proclaiming God as a cameo among numerous biblical stars or as an indistinguishable God among the numerous other gods.

Second, preaching is always about the proclamation of the great works of God in the past, present and future. We as preachers need to consider the following questions: Who is God? What is God saying? What is God doing? These questions need to be concerned with the past, present and future. It means, "God revealed Himself in the past (epiphany). God will reveal Himself in the future (*parousia*). But God, between what was and will be, is also with us here and now" (Cilliers 2004:46). As already examined, if we fail to preach the presence of God, we will make the following mistake: we are deluding ourselves that we can do something to transform ourselves.

To sum up, preaching is always about the proclamation of the reality of the present saving God and the work of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Cilliers 2004:53). As mentioned in section 1.2, this statement is a basic homiletical rule, which we confess. The South Korean

Presbyterian Church also stands on the Reformed tradition. That is why we as preachers should not lose the basic direction of the preaching ministry. Preaching is God's redemptive act today because Jesus Christ continues His work of redeeming and liberating the world in and through proclamation (Greidanus 1990:10). This is the way to glorify Him. Therefore, as mentioned already, the present God should be proclaimed in the sermon rather than human piety and deeds.

5.3.2. The biblical texts show God's face

The second voice of preaching is the biblical text/s. We as preachers proclaim the reality of the present saving God who exists as the Triune God. The problem is that the present saving God is not properly proclaimed in the selected sermons. As mentioned in section 5.2.2, the problem can be caused by the lack of biblical exegesis. In other words, the calling of preachers is to continue to proclaim a new perspective of God's merciful presence to the world and a new side of God, but it is not possible without reflecting on the Scriptures (Cilliers 2004:109). In order to accomplish our mission, we as preachers must focus on the Scriptures. Of importance here is the viewpoint used to observe the biblical texts.

What is required to overcome the lack of biblical exegesis? The following viewpoint of reading biblical texts for preaching is required by preachers: "Each text is a window that opens a unique vision of God's face" (Cilliers 2004:109). The point is that the Bible is the self-revelation of God and He is the centre of the Bible (Greidanus 1990:11; Cilliers 2004:108). When we explore the world of the text, its textures and fibres, we have the opportunity to hear the living voice of the gospel and we can see how God works (Cilliers 2004:108-109). Long (1989:45) also points out that "...we go to the biblical texts, not to glean a set of facts about God or the faith that can then be announced whenever and wherever, but to encounter a Presence of God and to hear God's voice". This perspective concerns the preacher's scriptural perception. The scriptural perception of preachers should have an influence on the exegesis of biblical texts.

Craddock points out the difficulty of biblical exegesis. He notes, "The difficulty inherent in the task of interpretation lies in part in the text and in part in the interpreter" (Craddock 1985:129). According to his classification, the problem of the lack of biblical exegesis among the selected sermons is in part the fault of the interpreter. The reason is because the preacher,

as the interpreter, approaches the text to draw up a sermon or to search biblical texts to authorize a sermon already in their mind, rather than listen to what the text has to say (Craddock 1985:132). Adopting this mind-set is detrimental to the process of biblical exegesis and creates a barrier to preaching itself (Craddock 1985:132). This attitude shows that a preacher's scriptural perception has a significant influence on his/her preaching. Thus, the resulting problem of the lack of biblical exegesis of the four selected sermons is owing to their scriptural perceptions.

Cilliers (2004:123) states that "...to preach exegetically correct is important, but it is not the final objective of preaching". Furthermore, he goes on to say, "The wonder of preaching is that it works with texts through which the living Person of God approaches us, texts with a theological nature in the sense that they, primarily, tell and retell the stories of the acting God" (Cilliers 2004:123). Therefore, "People do not need to become or be according to all kinds of moralistic methods like figures in biblical texts and do not need to reproduce the historical situation of the text in order to experience its actuality" (Cilliers 2004:123). However, preaching does not exclude human actions or reactions (Cilliers 2004:123).

To sum up, our scriptural perceptions have an influence on our exegesis of biblical texts, and our exegesis of biblical texts in turn has an impact on our sermons. Therefore, to avoid anthropocentric sermons, our scriptural perceptions should be changed as follows: we are to go to the text to seek God's face and to hear God's voice rather than to find moral, legal and exemplary norms. Nevertheless, the proclamation of God on the pulpit does not exclude human deeds; theologically, it includes them. Eventually, this is the problem of priority. If we miss that which is the priority of the biblical texts, or if we change the order of priority, we won't hear the voice of biblical texts.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (cited by Williamson 1964:9) states the following, "The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture...." This is our basic confession of faith about Scripture.

5.3.3. The transformation of the congregation: God is the first cause

The third voice of preaching is the congregation. God who speaks in our sermon does not speak without any purpose. God has His own purpose for speaking during preaching. More specifically, the purpose of preaching can be considered as follows: Firstly, God speaks to accomplish His constant redemptive works (Greidanus 1990:10). Secondly, God speaks to call us in the midst of the situations in which we find ourselves to be His faithful people (Long 1989:45). In this sense, the goal of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament is to relate the mighty acts of God and His constant redemptive works, so that people will respond with repentance and commitment, and with faith and hope in God (Greidanus 1990:11). God's living voice of the gospel always has a specific address and moment because it works in order to transform reality (Cilliers 2004:171). In this respect, the application of the Word of God to His people is an important task for the preacher.

As was discussed in section 5.2.3, the researcher closely examined inappropriate applications of godless sermons. The first reason for the inappropriate application was found to be when the preacher reverses the sequence of the biblical texts (Cilliers 2004:80). This can be theologically explained as follows, "Our transformation takes place on the basis of God's salvific deed in Christ and through the application of the reality of salvation through the Holy Spirit in, and to, humans" (Cilliers 2004:171). In other words, our deeds cannot cause our salvation and transformation. Nevertheless, as already analysed in section 4.2.2, the problem is that godless sermons change God's deeds to be the outcome or result of human deeds.

The transformational power comes from the triune God rather than from us. The cause of transformation does not come from the deeds of humans. The present saving God is a driver of this transformation. The responsibility of this transformation remains God's work that creates its own listeners, its own obedience to its own claims by means of His Word (Cilliers 2004:171). This is the South Korean Presbyterian Church's very basic confession of faith.¹⁹ This is an important principle—when preachers apply the biblical texts to their congregation.

To sum up, the first reason for the inappropriate application occurs because preachers miss

¹⁹ The Westminster Confession of Faith in section 5.2 states, "Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily freely, or contingently" (cited by Williamson 1964:48).

the above confession of faith, especially when applying the biblical texts. When they miss this principle, God's great deeds, which are the first cause, can be a result of the deeds of humans. The key principle of appropriate application is that God is the first cause. Human deeds cannot be the first cause. In this respect, preachers have to proclaim our transformation as a result of God's great deeds, which is the first cause. In other words, not only human salvation, but also our obedience, repentance and devotion are all the result of God's deeds.

The second reason for the inappropriate application is that there are many more discontinuities between the following two worlds: the world of the biblical text and the world of the congregation, even though there are continuities that might exist between the two certain historical situations (Cilliers 2004:110). When preachers do not consider these discontinuities and continuities, they might make the following mistakes.

The first mistake is that preachers treat the biblical texts arbitrarily and subjectively as historical analogies (Greidanus 1970:85-86; Cilliers 2004:114-115). Because of this mistake, Greidanus (1970:86) points out that preachers have to deal with the biblical text as a unique historical document to avoid de-historization²⁰. It does not mean that preachers have to ignore the historical analogues of the two worlds. The point is that they have to be careful to deal with the historical analogues. According to Cilliers (2004:114), "The use of historical analogues in preaching naturally has a certain right, but it must be done throughout in a theologically responsible way".

The second mistake is that preachers can make a simplistic equation of two different discontinued worlds. In this sense, Chapell (2005:233) warns that preachers must be careful not to make a simplistic application without sufficient exposition of the two different worlds. Cilliers also warns of simplistic equalizations ("Today it is just like that ...") (Cilliers 2004:114).

To sum up the second reason for the inappropriate application is that it occurs because preachers apply the biblical texts without sufficient interpretation of the two different worlds. That is why preachers have to know that there are significant gaps between the world of the

²⁰ According to Greidanus (1970:85), the reason to oppose exemplary preaching is that the unity of the one redemptive history is broken up into many histories. In this sense, the meaning of de-historization is to break up the one redemptive history into many.

biblical text and the present world, which cannot simply be connected from time to time, from culture to culture, and from context to context. We as preachers ought to keep the profound existential questions in our mind that are raised in the process of sermon preparation; at the same time, we are to truly listen to the voice of the people in their context, so that our preaching can bring them to spiritual maturity and theological power of discernment; to wisdom in the biblical sense of the word (Cilliers 2004:144).

In conclusion, God speaks in our sermons to accomplish His constant redemptive and transformational works. God is the first cause of our salvation and transformation. This is the starting point of our preaching.²¹ At the same time, when we as preachers apply the biblical texts to the current congregants, we have to remember that there are discontinuities and continuities between the two different worlds. This task²² is a difficult one for preachers (Cilliers 2004:144).

5.3.4. Preaching as the work of the Holy Spirit: Theonomic reciprocity

The last voice of preaching is the preacher. So far, the researcher has suggested a few things to overcome godless sermons. The above suggestions are grounded on the comprehensive assessments of the selected sermons (as mentioned in section 5.2). Nevertheless, these suggestions cannot be the only way to cope with the problem of godless sermons because preaching is a very complicated task. The point is that there is no simple way or formula to preach well. Cilliers (2004:26) points out that “...there is no rhetorical ten-point plan that can transform preachers into masters of sermons”. In other words, these suggestions cannot unconditionally guarantee that it is the only solution to overcome the problem of godless sermons. However, all the suggestions are considered to be the responsibility of the preacher. But is it really like this? The answer is ‘No’. The reason is as follows: God himself speaks and acts in and through our preaching according His own purpose. In other words, God plays a leading role in the ministry of preaching. Therefore, it is required to understand the relationship between the work of God and the work of the human preacher in the ministry of preaching.

21 cf. Campbell (1997:193) also insists that “...preaching should adhere to the ascriptive logic of the gospels and dare to preach Jesus of Nazareth in all his particularity by rendering him as the subject of his own predicates”. His understanding here is based on Hans Frei’s post-liberal theology. According to Frei, the starting point of theology and preaching is not human experience or existence, but rather the specific, unsubstitutable identity of Jesus Christ (Campbell 1997:57).

22 Cilliers describes these tasks as the contextualization of the Gospel (Cilliers 2004:144-145).

As discussed previously, preaching is not about proclaiming the historical, linguistic and theological exegesis of biblical texts. “The biblical texts intend to give us God’s living voice and this leads to an encounter with Him as a Person” (Cilliers 2004:30). Luther says that God’s living voice in the biblical text is the living voice of the gospel (*viva vox evangelii*). Therefore, the aim of preaching is to proclaim God’s living voice in the biblical texts. In this sense, the aim of preaching is not the correct exegesis of biblical texts. In other words, theologically, the correct exegesis of biblical texts cannot guarantee God’s presence on our pulpit. After all, preachers need to keep their ear close to the text, until the living, but hidden, voice in the biblical texts can be heard anew, and one can meet God (Cilliers 2004:30). Cilliers (2004:46) reminds us of the following words by Augustine: “...when Scripture speaks, God speaks.”, And, in Calvin’s words: “In Scripture we hear the voice of the Person of the speaking God”.

We hear the voice of the living God in Scripture. The point is that the mystery of preaching is here. As we confess, we can understand the revelation in the biblical texts because of the inward illumination of the Spirit of God (The Westminster Confession of Faith, section 1.5 and 6). In other words, we cannot understand the revelation of Scripture without the inward illumination of the Spirit of God and we cannot hear God’s living voice in Scripture without the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit. In the final analysis, the mystery of preaching is on the work of the Holy Spirit (Bohren 1980:74). Similarly, Cilliers (2004:28) says: “The secret of preaching, the theological integration of the voices, is profoundly a pneumatological mystery. The Spirit links the voices of the preacher, the text and of the congregation to become God’s voice”.

As stated previously, the South Korean Presbyterian Church stands on the following Reformer’s confession: the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God: *Praedicatio Verbi Dei est Verbum Dei*. However, there is a gap between our confession and our sermonic situation because paradoxically God’s voice can be eliminated on the pulpit. This gap and paradoxical phenomena of godless sermons should be understood by the relationship between the work of God and the work of His preacher.

How is the above-mentioned Reformer’s formula possible? Bohren (1980:76) provides an

explanation of this formula as follows: the verb “is (*est*)” should be considered as the relationship between God’s work and the work of humans. Bohren describes the Reformer’s formula through “theonomic reciprocity” which means the primacy of God, and at the same time, not to forget that humans are involved there (Bohren 1980:76). The preaching of the Word of God can indeed become the Word of God through, and in, theonomic reciprocity between the Spirit of God and the human preacher. In addition, the understanding of theonomic reciprocity glorifies God and indicates how to assess the deeds of preachers.

We, as preachers, have to know how we involve the work of the Spirit of God on the pulpit. Knowing this should be the starting point of preaching. The Spirit of God does not disregard us but includes us in His works (Bohren 1980:76; Cilliers 2004:183). “The Spirit of God works in a theonomic reciprocal way, retains the initiative, but repeatedly accepts us in service of the proclamation of the Gospel” (Cilliers 2004:184). Therefore, we as human preachers have to take charge of preaching because of theonomic reciprocity.

With an awareness of theonomic reciprocity, we as preachers cannot help kneeling down with the congregation before the mystery of God with our most profound vital question (Cilliers 2004:48). Because, in the light of theonomic reciprocity, we as preachers realize that our God is greater than our sermons and our voices. We as preachers are invited by the Spirit of God to be mediators between the world of biblical texts and the world of current contexts. In this sense, we cannot but agree with the following statement: “There is no true preaching without *epiclesis*” (Allmen 1962:31; Cilliers 2004:49). It does not mean that if we just pray, then all will be well in preaching. It means that this relationship is brought through the lasting working of the indwelling Spirit in us (Cilliers 2004:192). The indwelling Holy Spirit in a human preacher is the hope of preaching. God does not leave us alone.

5.3.5. Pointing toward the presence of God

To recap, the researcher briefly introduced the four essential voices of preaching to overcome the problem of godless sermons. Furthermore, they should be theologically integrated on the pulpit. In this integration process, God’s voice initiates and leads the dialogue between the essential voices of preaching (Cilliers 2004:32).

On the one hand, it is important to understand the theological integration of the voices; on the other hand, the role of the preacher is also a vital factor. Long (1989:24) mentions this as follows:

When a preacher delivers a sermon, that act is embedded in some larger framework of ministerial self-understanding. In other words, preachers have at least tacit images of the preacher's role, primary metaphors that not only describe the nature of the preacher but also embrace by implication all the other crucial aspects of the preaching.

In addition, in section 3.2.4 the researcher briefly mentioned the four prominent images/metaphors of the preacher, as identified by Long. Once again, these are: the herald, the pastor, the storyteller, and the witness. Furthermore, Long adds another image/metaphor, that of the witness. The present living God invites us to be His witness. According to Long (1989:42), this notion is not a new idea, and has deep roots in the Bible (cf. Acts 20:23, Isaiah 43:8-13).

Who is a witness? The witness metaphor has its origins in the law court. In the court scenario, a witness stands up and testifies to what they have been seen and heard. They provide a testimony of the case being heard in the court. In the context of preaching, Long explains that the preacher, as a witness, goes to the text on behalf of the congregation and testifies to the event they encounter between God and ourselves (Long 1989:45). One of the vital ways that we come to know God is through the Scriptures, because the Bible itself, as a faithful witness, testifies to the interaction of God with the whole creation (Long 1989:45). The significant thing here is that we as witnesses go to the Scriptures to encounter God's presence and to hear God's voice rather than to glean a set of facts about God (Long 1989:45). In this respect, the preacher's authority grows out of what has been seen and heard through the Scriptures (Long 1989:44).

According to a survey²³ of the South Korean Presbyterian Church, three out of five senior pastors (68.7%) defined preaching as follows: "Preaching is to proclaim the Word of God" (Ministry&Theology 2009:29). When we proclaim the Word of God, we have to preach what we have seen and heard through the Scriptures, rather than a set of facts about God.

23 cf. The footnote 10.

Therefore, we as preachers have to listen for the voice of God, look for the presence of God, and hope for the claim of God to be encountered through the biblical text (Long 1989:44).

As mentioned in section 3.2.1, both passages Matthew 28:1-10 and Luke 24:1-12 testify about Jesus Christ, who died on the cross and was raised on the third day. The four selected preachers in this study chose these biblical texts because it was Easter Sunday morning. They seem to be in agreement that these passages testify to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, do they correctly testify what they have seen and heard through the Scriptures? As pointed out in section 3.2.1 and 4.3, they display a lack of understanding regarding what the biblical texts testify to. In conclusion, as witnesses, it appears that they have incorrectly understood these biblical texts.

The researcher reasserts that the Bible is the self-revelation of God. Cilliers (2004:109) says that the biblical texts show a unique vision of God's face. Through the biblical texts, we hear God's voice. When preachers rightly see a unique vision of God's face and properly hear God's voice through the Scriptures, we are able to cope with the role of the witness very well. According to Bohren (1980:268), seeing and hearing are closely connected; thus, we can hear with our eyes and we can see with our ears. We can perceive God by seeing and hearing through the Scriptures. Therefore, being an eyewitness to the great acts of God is a very important component in the ministry of preaching. In this respect, Cilliers (2012:3; 2016:93) points out that "preaching is about perceiving" and "homiletics without optics is unthinkable: To preach is to see and to invite others to see". Therefore, as eyewitnesses we have to see God's great acts through the Scriptures, and we have to invite others to see what we have seen.

The expected problem is that we as preachers are often blinded or we become short-sighted (Cilliers 2012:6). For example, Cilliers (2016:97) reminds us of the undergirding ideology of apartheid, which was structured by shortsightedness; thus, everything was seen in black and white. It means that their perspective of God and of life were restricted and restrained, and their sight was blurred (Cilliers 2016:97). Our blindness and shortsightedness also fosters godless sermons because it means that preachers cannot properly see God's face through the biblical text/s.

How can we overcome our blindness and shortsightedness? As eyewitnesses we constantly have to revisit the Scriptures in order to revision (Cilliers 2016:97) because the biblical texts portray who God is and have a wealth of images/metaphors of God by which people need to live by (Cilliers 2004:211). Cilliers (2004:207-208) explains his point of departure as follows: “...certain basic images are contained in the biblical texts, without which we, as humans, cannot live, images of ourselves, of God, of our world; images that naturally also must be expressed linguistically in the form of metaphors, parables, etcetera”. When preachers as eyewitnesses read the biblical texts, we have to see certain basic images of God, of ourselves and of our world through the voice of Scripture. The preacher constantly moves back and forth over the bridge between the biblical text/s and our lives; thereafter, preaching can play an important role in opening up our perspectives to things never seen before (cf. Cilliers 2004:214; 2016:97). In this regard, Green (1989:106) mentions the following:

Revelation is the technical term for describing the inspiration of the original witnesses’ imaginations. The doctrine of *scripture* goes on to describe the inspiration of the texts in which those witnesses recorded what had been revealed to them. *Theology*, finally, is the technical term for the critical interpretation of revelation by means of the interpretation of scripture. For all three, imagination plays a crucial role. Revelation is an act of imagination; scripture is a work of imagination; and theology is an interpretation of imagination.

From this perspective, the Bible is indeed a book of the imagination. Preachers, as eyewitnesses, have to repeatedly return to the Scriptures, which contains our ancient source of images because their task is to imaginatively associate with the images in the Scriptures, for instance, like Jesus Himself said: The kingdom of God is like... (Cilliers 2004:210-211). However, “The image of God cannot be conjured up by human creativity or insight; it can only be revealed by God himself” (Green 1989:100).

Preachers often think as follows: they go to the Scriptures alone. As mentioned in section 5.3.4, we go to the Scriptures because God invites us to the ministry of preaching. In this sense, Cilliers (2004:211) mentions that the Spirit of God takes us back to the biblical texts. Cilliers (2004:211) describes this as follows:

The Spirit of God makes us sensitive for the time in which we live, for underlying

images, the icons that frequently want to hold us in an iron grip, and He repeatedly teaches us how to re-imagine the biblical images in and against these icons.

God indeed guides us how to re-imagine the biblical images of God, the world, and ourselves. Because of God's guidance, we can see God's face and hear God's voice through the Scriptures. This is why preachers, as His witnesses, can testify what they have seen to their congregants.

As already mentioned, preaching invites others to see and not only to hear. In this sense, preaching is seeing, not only hearing. In other words, as eyewitnesses, the role of the preacher is to show their congregants what they have seen and experienced in the Scriptures. A relevant question that comes to the fore here is, "How can preachers show God's face and God's voice, which is invisible?"

Cilliers (2016:116) uses the following metaphor: "God's footsteps (*vestigia dei*) in this world are not the thunderous stomping of a giant. On the contrary, His footsteps are easily overlooked and not heard". Furthermore, he says, "Homiletical reframing²⁴ helps us to hear these footsteps and see the 'signs' of God's immanence upon people, and point towards God's (fragile, crucified) presence in the frames of our realities" (Cilliers 2016:116). Finally, preachers can show their congregants God's immanence and point towards God's presence using homiletical reframing.

Cilliers (2010:88) explains the concept of homiletical reframing as follows:

The frame through and within which we observe reality, reveals and forms our image of God and humanity. Preaching is all about this framing and reframing of our perspectives - ultimately about being reframed by the actions of God that opens up dimensions far beyond what we could imagine.

Homiletical reframing helps the congregants to perceive the invisible God. It also helps us to be faithful eyewitnesses. Cilliers introduces the following three examples of aesthetic

²⁴ According to Cilliers (2012:7), "The theory of reframing was originally developed within the context of a philosophically based theory of change. One of the objectives of reframing was to create new alternative behaviours. Reframing changes meaning, and changed meaning results in behavioural change".

reframing: reframing as renaming, reframing as reconfiguration, and reframing as re-imagination (Cilliers 2016:105-116). He provides a brief explanation of each example of aesthetic reframing, which is summarized by the researcher in the sections below:

Firstly, Cilliers (2016:105-109) describes reframing as renaming as follows: Through the act of reframing as renaming, the object is given a new identity because it is given a new name. Therefore, it becomes a new reality. There are many instances of renaming in the biblical text. For example, we as sinners are renamed through the Christ event, and thereby, we are now called Christians. Reality is reframed through the spectacles of Scripture. Through reframing and renaming our identity, our lives have been turned upside down.

Secondly, Cilliers (2016:113) describes reframing as reconfiguration as follows: Reconfiguration has a specific pattern. First, there is a moment of orientation. At this moment, we recognize something familiar. This is followed by the phase of disorientation. Here, a familiar metaphor and image suddenly becomes strange and challenging. Finally, we move into the phase of *re-orientation*. As a result, we enter a new and often strange space.

Figure 5.1. ‘Crucifixion’ Mattias Grünewald (Public Domain)



Thirdly, Cilliers (2016:114-115) illustrates reframing as re-imagination as follows: For example, Matthias Grünewald (1470–1528) was a painter from the Reformist era. His famous depiction of Christ’s crucifixion (cf. Figure 5.1) was completed two years after Luther nailed his statements to the church door²⁵. This painting represents a significant paradigm shift in which Christ is no longer surrounded by a sentimental halo. The painting no longer displays the athletic and heroic Christ of the Renaissance. The body of Christ symbolizes the most extreme disfiguration and degradation possible of one human being by another human being/s. He re-images the entire image of the crucifixion of Christ. In this depiction, the Crucified Christ is fundamentally changed. This masterpiece represents a form of re-imagining of the gospel.

The Bible is filled with languages and images that reframe reality. By means of the above-mentioned examples of aesthetic reframing, the preacher can become a faithful witness who points toward the presence of God.

In addition, Cilliers (2004:216-217) introduces a few guidelines for the development and implementation of re-imagining. These are as follows:

Firstly, “...work hard on the text” (Cilliers 2004:216). He points out that we as eyewitnesses have to find the dominant image in the text; therefore, we have to be meticulously committed to the text to continuously encounter it—historically, exegetically and hermeneutically (Cilliers 2004:216).

Secondly, “Do not try to explain the image” (Cilliers 2004:216). He explains this as follows: a typical characteristic of modernism is that it seeks to explain everything logically (Cilliers 2004:216). If we explain all the mysterious images logically, the reality of these images will die. Cilliers (2004:216) commands, “Don’t change the image into a concept”. This is because the image itself is a message.

Thirdly, Cilliers (2014:216) says, “Regard an image from various perspectives”. View it like a diamond from all sides for a better estimation of its value, as it has many facets. An image cannot be easily explained using logical words. As eyewitnesses, we need a greater

²⁵ Martin Luther nailed the Ninety-five Theses against indulgences on October 31, 1517.

appreciation for the dominant image in the text.

Lastly, Cilliers (2004:217) says, “Mould an image in a particular form”. This is the most difficult assignment in preaching. As mentioned above, preachers often change the image in the text, for instance, the ideology of apartheid. For this reason, preachers need to portray the primary image in Scripture in a form that people would comprehend without losing the essence of the primary image in the process (Cilliers 2004:217). It means that we have to be careful not to damage scriptural images.

To sum up, all preachers are called as eyewitnesses of the gospel. Therefore, preachers need to see and hear what the biblical text itself testifies to. However, the problem is that preachers are often blinded and become shortsighted because of their murky frame. This problem may also cause godless sermons. How can we overcome this problem? Homiletical reframing can help us to see and hear God’s footsteps and the signs of God’s immanence. When we overcome this problem, we can point towards the presence of God on the pulpit.

5.4. Conclusion

In the beginning of this chapter, the researcher made a number of comprehensive assessments based on the previous analysis of the selected sermons. These are summed up as follows: Firstly, the selected sermons are anthropocentric rather than theocentric. Secondly, preachers do not properly interpret the biblical texts. Thirdly, the biblical texts may be inappropriately applied to the congregants. When preparing sermons, these careless attitudes can give rise to godless sermons.

Godless sermons trigger the following problematic symptoms among the four essential voices of preaching: the voice of God is eliminated and manipulated on the pulpit, the voice of the biblical text is stuck in speechless, the congregation is deluded, and the preacher is left all alone (Cilliers 2004:81). These problematic symptoms are also found in the selected sermons. This is briefly summed up as follows:

Firstly, the voice of God is eliminated and manipulated. The preachers do not rightly declare God’s working here and now. For example, in Church A, the preacher proclaims the Almighty

God as a passive God who is subordinate to our deeds. In Sermon C, the preacher proclaims that the glory of God can be caused and experienced by the good deeds of humans and human piety.

Secondly, the voice of the biblical text is stuck in speechless. Preacher's misjudge the historical text, and therewith, dishonour the Scriptures. For example, the preacher in Church A intentionally ignores the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the main issue of Matthew 28:1-10. Another example is that the preacher in Church B changes the resurrection of Jesus Christ into an unexpected incident; there are many unexpected incidents happening in our daily lives.

Thirdly, the congregation is deluded. The preacher proclaims that people are able to obey God's law if they truly want to and try hard enough. In Church A, the congregation is captivated by the foolish delusion that they might experience a miracle when they faithfully follow Jesus Christ to the end on their own. In Church B, the congregants fall prey to the following delusion: when they are peaceful, when they are not afraid, and when they go to Galilee, God will admit that they are faithful.

Lastly, the preacher is left as an individual alone with their moralistic, legalistic and exemplary messages. For example, in Church C, how can the preacher see and experience the glory of God by him/herself if God is silent and if He hides His face from him/her? No one can guarantee it, but preachers feel that they have to live as they proclaim it on their pulpit. No one can continue to bear such an unbearable responsibility. We are human preachers. That is why we as preachers cannot guarantee that, "The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God". Our God is greater than us. If we constantly preach that we can see and experience by ourselves the glory of God, we will be alone.

According to the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis, the authority of preaching can be described as a correct mixture and integration of the four voices of preaching. On the contrary, the authority of preaching will be lost when the four essential voices of preaching are incorrectly integrated. As was already mentioned in section 4.2.1:

Preaching takes place when God's voice is heard through the voice of the text, in the

voice of the time (congregational context), through the (unique) voice of the preacher. When these four voices become one voice, then the sermon is indeed *viva vox evangelii* (Cilliers 2004:32).

Therefore, the four essential voices of preaching should be correctly integrated in our sermons to overcome godless sermons. In this respect, the researcher identifies a number of practical suggestions in terms of the four essential voices of preaching as follows: Firstly, preachers need to know that our God is distinguished from the gods of other religions. What makes our God distinguishable? Our God is the present saving God who exists as the Triune God. Secondly, preachers need to go to the biblical text to seek God's face and to hear His voice, rather than search biblical texts to authorize a sermon they have already formulated in their mind, because the Scripture is the self-revelation of God. Thirdly, preaching is not a unilateral proclamation. God's living voice of the gospel always has a specific address and moment. Therefore, preachers need to be careful when applying biblical texts to present-day congregants, and need to follow the sequence of the biblical texts; especially, God is the first cause of our transformation. Fourthly, preachers need to understand the relationship between the work of God and humans in the ministry of preaching. We as preachers involve the work of the Spirit of God in terms of theonomic reciprocity. These practical suggestions should be helpful to overcome the above-mentioned problematic symptoms of godless sermons. Lastly, preachers need to understand their role as a preacher. As eyewitnesses, preachers constantly point toward the presence of God in order to show what they have seen and heard through the Scriptures to their congregants.

The final chapter below will summarize and conclude the research.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSION

6.1. Summary of the research

The phenomenon of God being missing on the pulpit is the main research problem of this study. To obtain a better understanding, the researcher sought to analyze and assess South Korean Presbyterian preaching. Thus, the aim of the research was to discern the way God is missing in the sermon, and to suggest homiletical ways to cope with the phenomenon of godless sermons.

The research is based on the following hypotheses: there is the phenomenon of God missing in the sermonic situation of the South Korean Presbyterian Church. The voice of God can be manipulated by means of exemplary, legalistic and moralistic messages. The pneumatological approach should successfully deal with the phenomenon of godless sermons.

In accordance with the purpose and hypotheses of the research, four selected sermons were analyzed using the Heidelberg method of sermon analysis; this was done in chapters two and three. In chapter two, the researcher examined the linguistic signs of the four selected sermons. Through this process, the superficial structures of the sermons were identified, which provides important clues of the depth structure of each sermon. In chapter three, the researcher examined the essential homiletical questions, which are based on the four essential voices of preaching. These are as follows: God, the biblical texts, the congregation and the preacher. By means of the sermons analysis, the researcher discerned the superficial and depth structures of the four selected sermons.

In chapter four, the researcher dealt with the phenomenon of godless sermons in the selected sermons. Firstly, the researcher discussed the following issues: the core factors of preaching; what godless sermons are, and the characteristics of godless sermons. What is a godless sermon? A godless sermon is a sermon where God is missing in the sermonic situation; in other words, it refers to the absence of God. It was found that the vacuum caused by the absence of God is being filled with religious human beings. What are the different types of godless sermons? The means of moralistic, legalistic and exemplary messages result in

godless sermons.

Secondly, the researcher investigated each sermon in terms of godless sermons. As a result, God is missing in sermons A, B and C, but not sermon D. The present saving work of God is properly preached in sermon D, but God's great work is outrightly replaced with human piety and deeds in sermons A, B and C due to the use of moralistic, legalistic and exemplary messages. It is noteworthy to mention here, that the phenomenon of godless sermons is found in the South Korean Presbyterian Church.

In chapter five, the researcher comprehensively examined the problematic sermons (sermon A, B and C). He explored the phenomenon of godless sermons and sought to find out why this occurs. The results were as follows: firstly, the problematic sermons tend to reflect anthropocentric preaching. Secondly, the problematic sermons tend to show a lack of biblical exegesis. Thirdly, the problematic sermons tend to move easily from the biblical text, to application, to the congregation. These false processes and habits produce godless sermons.

In the subsequent section, the researcher provides practical suggestions on how to overcome godless sermons. These practical suggestions are based on the four basic voices of preaching, which are as follows: The direction of the sermon should be theocentric. Preachers need to go to the Scriptures to seek God's face and to hear God's voice. Preachers need to consider that God is the first cause of our transformation when they apply biblical texts to the present-day congregants. Preachers need to know that they involve the work of the Spirit of God in terms of theonomic reciprocity. Preachers need to know that God calls them as His witnesses.

6.2. Conclusion of the research

By means of this research, the phenomenon of godless sermons was explored in the South Korean Presbyterian Church. Three of the four selected sermons were classified as godless sermons. Legalistic, moralistic and exemplary messages were found to trigger the phenomenon of godless sermons. However, the researcher does not unconditionally stipulate that legalistic, moralistic and exemplary messages must be rejected in the sermonic situation. The problem is that there is improper biblical exegesis and inappropriate application in sermon A, B and C. That is why the sermon becomes anthropocentric preaching.

As a result of the phenomenon of godless sermons, the voice of God is eliminated and manipulated on the pulpit, in turn, the biblical text becomes useless, the congregation is deluded, and the preacher is left as an individual alone (Cilliers 2004:81).

In conclusion, how do we as preachers overcome the phenomenon of godless sermons? Preachers need to understand the following manner of integrating the four essential voices of preaching as follows (Cilliers 2004:32):

Preaching takes place when God's voice is heard through the voice of the text, in the voice of the time (congregational context), through the (unique) voice of the preacher. When these four voices become one voice, then the sermon is indeed *viva vox evangelii*.

How do these four voices become one voice? The answer is that 'the preaching of the Word of God' can become indeed 'the Word of God' through, and in, theonomic reciprocity between the Spirit of God and the human preacher.

6.3. Contribution of the research

In the South Korean Presbyterian Church, the researcher lists the following benefits:

First, the South Korean Presbyterian Church stands on the tradition of the Reformed Church. Therefore, they confess, "The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God". However, there is a gap between their confession and their sermonic situation. This was confirmed through the analysis of the four selected sermons. The researcher demonstrated that there is the phenomenon of godless sermons among the selected sermons. It will be a paramount benefit to realize the seriousness of God being missing in the sermon.

Second, the Scriptures contain various messages of the law, morality and exemplarity. Therefore, the researcher does not unconditionally oppose these messages. However, the researcher substantiates how legalistic, moralistic and exemplary messages trigger the phenomenon of godless sermons. This symptom can occur among sermons with instructive purpose. The aim of instructive sermons is to transform the congregants. The researcher gives a practical suggestion in this regard (in 5.3.3): God is the first cause of our salvation and transformation. These guidelines will benefit when the preacher proclaims the various

messages of the law, moral and exemplarity in the Scriptures.

Third, the following voices comprise the four essential voices of preaching: the voice of God, the voice of the biblical texts, the voice of the congregation and the voice of preaching. The researcher explained how the phenomenon of godless sermons affects each voice. This phenomenon does not only eliminate the voice of God, but also the voice of the biblical texts becomes speechless, the congregants are deluded, and the preacher is left alone. Therefore, the researcher provided practical suggestions in terms of the four essential voices of preaching. Finally, these practical suggestions in section 5.3 will be a benefit to integrate the four essential voices of preaching on the pulpit of the South Korean Presbyterian Church.

Lastly, the basic premise of the research is as follows: ‘The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God’. As a preacher, the researcher asks, ‘How is this possible?’ By means of this study, the researcher answered this question. We as preachers get involved in the ministry of preaching by the Spirit of God through, and in, theonomic reciprocity. In this respect, we as preachers can constantly proclaim the Word of God with humility and confidence.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: SERMON OF CHURCH A

Date: 2016. 03. 27.

Title: People who met the resurrected Lord

Text: Matthew 28:1-10

Who did the resurrected Lord meet first? We are all curious about the future. We want to know who will win the Korean basketball game. Which team will win the Korean baseball game and the Korean football league this season? Last week, the whole world watched the match between Sedol Lee and AlphaGo with great interest. Artificial Intelligence versus humans, are you not curious? Who will be the next member of Congress? Who will be the next president of South Korea?

Dear brothers and sisters! Jesus is resurrected. I am not emphasizing the resurrection of Jesus today because it is a fact. After the historical event of the Lord's resurrection, He met his disciples and many other people. Who did Jesus meet first? He met Mary Magdalene first. Magdalene is the name of her hometown. She lived five kilometres from Galilee. Jesus, the King of kings, the resurrected Lord, revealed himself to Mary, who was loved by Jesus Christ. There is a secret in this story.

Who is Mary Magdalene? The four Gospels tell her story. The Bible says that Mary was possessed by seven demons. There are many demons mentioned in the Bible, like the demonic army, evil spirits, and unclean demons. She was under the curse of seven demons—screaming loudly, running into the fire and river, and in pain. After all this, she realized what happened to her.

When I visit the psychiatric hospital, I see many young people. The busiest hospitals in Korea are the psychiatric hospitals. Many people suffer from the same problem as Mary. I feel very sorry for them.

She lived a life less than that of an animal and people despised her. There was no lunatic asylum back then as there is today. She met Jesus Christ. He cleansed her and the seven

35 demons left. After Jesus died on the cross, many people forgot the blessing and grace of
36 Jesus, but Mary did not forget. Therefore, she was not afraid of the Jews and the Roman
37 soldiers. The risen Jesus should have gone to Galilee because he had promised to do so, but
38 he appeared to Mary first.

39
40 It is not easy to meet people of high status. They are the one's who make decisions, rather
41 than you, me and us. Jesus is the 'King of kings and the Lord of lords'. He chose to appear to
42 Mary first, instead of his disciples. He loved her more than His eleven disciples. We can see
43 that Jesus never left her and His love for her was boundless. It is surprising that Jesus met
44 Mary before He met His disciples.

45
46 Our strength, power, popularity and money will all disappear. It is not easy to socialize with
47 someone who is in sorrow and pain. Dear brothers and sisters! She is different from most
48 people. Many left Jesus Christ but she did not leave Him. Mary followed Jesus all the way,
49 even to the cross and the grave. Jesus gave Mary His hand when she came to see Him and
50 poured perfume on Him. She told Peter that Jesus has risen, and Peter informed the other
51 disciples. The news of the risen Jesus continually spread from Mary to others.

52
53 When Napoleon had power, the whole world was with him, but when he lost his power, he
54 was alone on Saint Helena Island. There is none like Jesus Christ. The wealth and glory of
55 the world may soon disappear, but Jesus Christ, our Lord, will never abandon us even when
56 we are in trouble. When we lose the way of life, when we become weak and when we grow
57 old, He never gives up on us, forever. It is a natural thing to be rejected by people. The praise
58 of people is not important; to be abandoned by people should not be a thing to despair.

59
60 I have learned one thing being in the ministry over the last forty-six years. The obvious thing
61 is that people are not faithful. This means that I am not disappointed when someone betrays
62 me. King David gave us a good example. When David escaped the coup plot of his son,
63 Absalom, many people reviled him and pelted stones at him. Then his soldiers told him: "Let
64 us go over and cut off their heads". David said to them: "Leave them, my son is trying to take
65 my life". The way it is in the life of Christians—when God is with us, we are fine, He will
66 never abandon us.

Dear brothers and sisters! Even if everyone abandons us, God is still with us—we are all blessed people. If God is with you, you are a winner, even if all people betray you. (Amen!) Relationships with people can be misleading and we can betray each other. There can be no permanent relationship with people. Nevertheless, the relationship between Jesus and Mary is infinite. His love is everlasting.

When I look at our congregation, they also have many difficulties. They are lonely, discouraged and sad—suffering from depression. A few days ago, I went to a hospital and met a woman there. During the time she was in hospital, no one came looking for her because her children live abroad; they are all busy physicians and doctors. She sobbed while narrating her family story and loneliness. Therefore, I say: “Life is basically like that. Do not send your children to study abroad. Even if they do not succeed, they will be close to you. People are all the same”. There is only Jesus. Do you hope for a nice husband? Do you hope for a nice wife? Please, be grateful to live together because God will never abandon us, nor forsake us.

He is the living God. We see this in the encounter with Mary. People judge by external appearances when they meet someone. They would like to meet someone who is successful and gain popularity. Jesus is not like most people. That is why He is so good. He seeks those who are lonely, poor and unsuccessful. He holds their hand and raises them up. When we are in trouble, there is someone who knocks on the door.

(Singing) Title: ‘In these dark days lift up your eyes to Jesus’. Lyrics: “In these dark days lift up your eyes to Jesus, lift up your eyes He’s still on the throne. And come what may, He will never forsake you, for He is God. To Him all things are known. Lift up your eyes He is still there, be not be dismayed, He knows your weight of care. In these dark days lift up your eyes to Jesus, and trust in Him, He will bear your burden”. I have done well in the first part of the Sunday worship service. It is difficult for me to sing continuously.

Mary is alone. She does not have any family. We say that someone was born with a ‘dirty spoon’ and a ‘golden spoon’. She was born with a dirty spoon. There is no one who does not know her. However, she is the most blessed Christian in the world. She is the happiest lady among the women. There is a ‘Mary evangelistic meeting’ for women in almost every church. There are many “Mary’s” in the Western world. The best blessing comes from Jesus Christ.

I preached in the worship service at the 141st anniversary of the birthday of President Syngman Rhee, who was the first president of South Korea. Syngman Rhee studied at Paejae Haktang, which is located nearby here. He thought Jesus was great, but that Confucius was greater, and even more so, that Buddha was greater than Jesus. Therefore, he did not believe in Jesus. One day, he was imprisoned for treason in the Hansung Prison and was handed down a death sentence. While incarcerated, he suffered tremendous pain. In his difficulty he began to read the Bible through the missionaries. He found the truth in the Bible. Jesus Christ is alive. He is our Saviour. He hears our prayers. As a result, Syngman Rhee began to pray while at the crossroads of his life.

Jesus Christ hears our prayers. Our God hears our prayers. He is the Almighty God. This is why we pray to God, we believe, we go to church, and we pray to God.

Syngman Rhee prayed for two things: “God, please save my soul. Please, save our nation”. How do we know the answer to his prayer? The answer comes from the heart. The peace of Jesus Christ came upon him; rather than being worried, anxious, feeling the pain of his life, Jesus Christ gave him courage and strength.

What is the reason that we go to church? Why do you believe in Jesus Christ? Why do you pray to Jesus Christ? Because He comes to meet us. Because He solves our problems. (Amen!) To meet the Lord is the eternal meeting. The Samaritan woman met Jesus and it was an eternal encounter. It is the same with Zacchaeus and Mary Magdalene. The encounter with Jesus is eternal to us. The encounter with Jesus Christ is different from the encounter with human beings because it is impossible for a human encounter to be eternal. There is no special meeting between human beings, even though we meet every day. The encounter with Jesus Christ is everlasting and it gives us life, power, miracles and blessings.

Syngman Rhee went to study abroad because someone had to go to America as an envoy. Eventually, he studied at George Washington University, Harvard University and Princeton University. He received his doctorate in six years. When he got to the University interview, the interviewer asked him: “Why do you want to study here?” He answered: “I have to study to make the Republic of Korea a country that believes in Jesus”. Thereafter, George Washington University gave scholarships to seminarians. Syngman Rhee minored in

theology. He went on to become the first president of the Republic of Korea. The first constituent assembly was to begin with a prayer by him. “Please pray, Pastor Eun Young Lee”. God appointed Syngman Rhee as the first president. He declared Sunday a holiday and didn’t hold any events on Sundays. He enacted Christmas and made a chaplain’s program for the army. He facilitated school education because at that time the illiteracy rate was 78%. He signed the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Agreement. Because of this, we could defend the country. He divided the land between the people through land reforms. When the country was in danger because of the Korean War, he gathered together 250 pastors at Choryang Church for fasting and prayer for two weeks. God protected this country because of their prayers.

There is no perfect person. This country was governed for thirty-six years by Japan. After liberation from Japan, this country advanced so quickly into a democratic society from a monarchy. Look carefully at Western history. Democracy took place in Western European countries at least 200 years ago. The market economy took place immediately. This country became a Christian nation and South Korea sent out more missionaries than any other country. These are all the merits of President Rhee. In this respect, as the next president I will elect someone who is knowledgeable about the first president, Syngman Lee, because it is important to have an accurate understanding of the modern history of Korea. They should not be chased any longer. I was preaching this in front of the important people of the government. They applauded me, but you did not.

We must meet the Risen Lord. President Lincoln grew up in a poor family. His mother died when he was young. He met Jesus when he was reading the Bible. He confessed: “I met the Risen Jesus Christ when I was reading the Bible”. Everyone must meet Jesus. The most blessed people, family, and nation are those who meet the Risen Lord.

Dear brothers and sisters! Don’t give up no matter the situation. Don’t think, ‘I was born with a dirty spoon’ because God can even use a dirty spoon. Why did God establish the Church? He established the Church to turn a dirty spoon into a golden spoon. Whoever meets the Risen Jesus, will experience a miracle. This country had no chance, less than 1%. On Easter Sunday morning, April 6, 1885, Underwood and Appenzeller, who were missionaries, brought the Good News of the Risen Jesus Christ to this country. The miracle of South Korea was caused by this Good News, Jesus was resurrected and Jesus died for us. Christianity is a

167 religion of miracles. If you believe, then surely a miracle will happen, surely!

168

169 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a Russian novelist, was accused of anti-Soviet propaganda. That is
170 why he suffered in a Siberian concentration camp. When in extreme pain he tried to kill
171 himself, but someone appeared to him and drew a cross. He wanted to see the person, but
172 suddenly they disappeared. Jesus came to him. At that time, he found peace of mind and
173 freedom. He experienced grace and a miracle. He said: "I realized that there is a power that is
174 stronger than the Soviet Union. I learned that the hope of all the humanity could be contained
175 into the small shape of a cross". After that, he went to the United States. It is a miracle. He
176 received the Nobel Prize for Literature. He worked hard for his country. The spirit of the
177 resurrection of Jesus gets rid of the darkness in our hearts and brings us a new way of being.
178 We are not gods. I hope that there will be the blessings of God in your life and the peace of
179 God be with you.

180

181 Jesus Christ is the King of kings and our friend at the same time. He can be our mother,
182 physician or bodyguard. The human guard is not perfect. When we believe in Jesus Christ,
183 we are comfortable because of the peace of God and His divine protection. He guides us
184 when we walk in the unknown world. We realize that Jesus Christ is our friend and he is the
185 King of kings in our life.

186

187 There are many fights between a dirty spoon and a golden spoon. It is not right to cause
188 conflict and fights. We should not choose the way of conflict. May the grace of Jesus Christ,
189 the King of kings, the Messiah, be with you all the time.

190

191 I use to pray like this: "I will go wherever You send". However, I regret praying like this. He
192 really sent me wherever. It was difficult to minister to Andong Pungbuk Church. There was
193 fighting amongst the believers. The oldest congregational member was fifteen years old. I
194 appointed him to be our church deacon. The church gave me 2,000 won per month and I was
195 offering 2,000 won per month. How did we live? I made bread and sold it at a primary school
196 and my wife went around town selling stainless steel bowls. She got pepper and garlic instead
197 of money, which I sold at the Andong traditional market. It was really a very difficult time.
198 None of my family were believers, so no one helped me. One day my child got sick. We
199 could only go to the doctor after a year because we were too poor. When we got to the

hospital, it was too late. Unfortunately, I had to bury my child. Have you cried like me? Have you suffered as I have suffered? I have endured much hardship following Jesus Christ.

In 1970, I moved to Seoul. At that time, I was feeling very weak, so I went to the doctor. I was diagnosed with a lung disease, which was already at stage three. I vomited blood for three years and then my wife also began to vomit blood. Every night, we vaccinated each other. I could not even walk fifty metres. I tried not to fall so I held onto the pulpit. One day, I went with a group of pastors to Naejang Mountain on a retreat. I could not climb the mountain, but there was a 90-year-old man who could do it. I therefore stayed behind in the motel. A few years ago, I went to the Naejang Mountain again because I was invited to lecture at the Union rally. It is really the grace of God, isn't it? Our Lord is alive. There is nothing I have not tried, but the Living God keeps guiding me and He is with me.

Dear brothers and sisters! Do not be discouraged. When you look to the Lord, he will guide you and be with you. I surely believe that He is alive and He is with us all the time. Do not bear a heavy burden alone; leave it to the Lord. Do not focus on your weaknesses. Do not be disheartened. Do not rely on people too much. Do not be overly concerned about what people say.

There was a deer that had a shiny nose; the other deer were bullying him. But one day, Santa found the deer with the shiny nose, because he needed to deliver the presents during the darkest night. The other deer envied him. Do not go for surgery to remove your shiny nose; your turn will come. We will see miracles when we put our faith in Jesus Christ. Hallelujah! I believe that a miracle is on its way today as you walk with the Lord.

Carl Gustav Jung, who was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist, said: "The modern Christians do not believe in miracles thereby there is no miracles in their life". Please, believe in the Lord who will cause miracles to happen in your life, as he did in the lives of President Rhee, President Lincoln and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

APPENDIX 2: SERMON OF CHURCH B

Date: 2016. 03. 27.

Title: Lord of the resurrection.

Text: Matthew 28:1-12

Let's cry out today's title: "Lord of the resurrection". Again! "Lord of the resurrection".

Jesus died on the cross. It was the first day after the Sabbath. Early on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were on their way to the tomb. They had no idea that an unexpected event would happen. They went to the tomb. When they arrived there, something unexpected happened. It was amazing. A totally unexpected incident happened. They were afraid and scared. Perhaps it was one of the following four situations they feared:

Firstly, let's see verse 2. "There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it". Think about this. Did they expect a violent earthquake? But there was a violent earthquake. Let's consider this together. When we go to the tomb at dawn, suddenly the ground starts to shake. Is this frightening? Is it not something to fear? When they were on the road, there was a violent earthquake. An angel of the Lord appeared. They knew it was an angel or a ghost. There was someone like a human being. This situation spooked them.

This fearful situation continued. Let's see verses 4 and 5. "The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women: "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified"." They were afraid because of the previous situation. The guards became like dead men because of this situation. If the next person were afraid, it would be even scarier. Because of the guards at the grave, they were more afraid. At this time, the angel said: "Do not be afraid. Jesus Christ is alive." They were terrified listening to the voice of the angel. It was a very frightening experience.

Let's see verses 6 and 7: "He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he was laid. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

Jesus was not there where they had laid him to rest. The dead body of Jesus was gone. Is this also a frightening situation? There was an earthquake and an angel appeared. There was an unknown voice. Jesus was not there. Would you be afraid? This was not the end.

Let's see verses Matthew 28:9-10: Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings!" he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." The women followed the instructions of the angel. They quickly went to the disciples. Suddenly, Jesus appeared in front of them. Were they happy? Were they terrified? Imagine it. They never expected this situation when they arrived at the tomb. Suddenly, it happened. There was an earthquake and someone appeared at the tomb. A stranger then said, Jesus was not where he had been laid. Suddenly, they met Jesus Christ. At that time, Jesus said: "Are you peaceful? Do not be afraid. Go to Galilee."

Who can be peaceful in this situation? Who can be peaceful when unexpected events occur? By the way, the first words from Jesus were: "Are you peaceful?" This question includes an important truth. Why did he ask this question? He was alive. The risen Lord is the Lord of peace. He lets us know that the peace of the Lord is inside of us. The life of Jesus is in you. The life of Jesus gives peace to us. In this respect, He asked: "Are you peaceful?"

Similarly, a woman brought a washing machine with her into a marriage. After constant use over many years, the machine no longer worked like it should. Whenever she did the laundry, it irritated her. The machine was frequently out of order. So she said to her husband, "Honey, buy a washing machine for me". He replied, "Fix it and use it again". So she fixed it again and again. Until the machine could no longer be fixed. She asked her husband again. "Honey, let's buy a brand new one". Her husband bought the newest type of washing machine for her. Then one day when she was using the washing machine, he asked: "Is it working well?"

This is the same, when the Lord asked: "Are you peaceful?" I died on the cross. I could not fix it. I was continually out of order. I could not be peaceful. At this time, Jesus Christ died with us and for us. Now, he is alive. The women who were in front of Jesus Christ were changed into new creatures. Amen! There is a new life in me. It means that the life of Jesus is now in me. Therefore, Jesus said: "You are not an old man. You are a new man". Because you

are a new existence, a new life is inside you. The new life inside you is Jesus Christ who is peace. Jesus said that because of the peace of Jesus that is inside them.

During the unexpected situation that arose, Jesus asked them: “Are you peaceful?” There is the peace of Jesus in you.

Let’s see Numbers 6:26-27: “The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.” Who is the peace? God is peace.

Let’s see Philippians 4:6-7: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

The life of Jesus is in us who are born again and made new. It means that we have inner peace. Therefore, he asked “Are you peaceful?” Life in the world doesn’t always go as planned. When we get married, we dream of a happy marriage. May I ask, are you truly happy? Why don’t you answer? After a few days of being married, we begin to experience the unpleasant things. We think of having a baby to make our marriage a happier one. Wives fall pregnant and their bellies expand. May I ask the women, “When were you happier?” After having a baby? When the baby was still in your womb you were happier. Although it was hard to live a daily life, the happiest time was when the baby was still in the womb. However, we expected ten months to pass quickly. During that time, we thought we would be happy when the baby is born. However, after delivering the baby, we realized we were happier when the baby was in the womb because we need to change their diapers and wash their feeding bottles. Finally, we are consumed by our lovely babies. Then, as parents, mothers think they will be happy when the child begins to walk itself. But when they begin to walk they touch everything and break it. Then we think, after they are a little bigger we will be happy. Are you really happy? Now they no longer listen to you. They then begin school. We say to them, “Study hard”. But they do not usually study hard. Sometimes we would receive a phone call from their teacher because they have gotten into trouble. Then we expect it to be fine when our children have matured. But when they are fully grown, they begin to challenge us. After that, we think it will be good if they marry. The reality is not like that. When they marry, they begin to ask you other things. May I ask only women, “When was the

100 happiest time of your marriage?” When your baby was in your womb?

101

102 There is nothing that goes according to plan. It is the same regarding your own business.
103 When you start a business, you dream of success. If you are successful, you dream of
104 spending your money on mission. But it doesn’t happen the way we expect. This is how life
105 works in the world.

106

107 My children, my job and my business do not go the way I expect it to, just as the women did
108 not imagine the unexpected incident in today’s biblical texts would happen. At that time,
109 Jesus asked: “Are you peaceful?” How should we respond to the question?

110

111 Let’s see verse 9: “Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings!” he said. They came to him,
112 clasped his feet and worshiped him.” Are you peaceful? Jesus asks us this question every day.
113 He not only visits Mary but us too. He visits us every day and asks us: “Are you peaceful?”
114 This question means that the life of peace is within you. How should we react here? The
115 reaction to kneel before the Lord must take place in our daily life. Yes! You are right. I am
116 peaceful. The Lord of peace is within me. This is how we should respond. If we don’t
117 respond like Mary Magdalene, we will someday hear his reproach.

118

119 Revelation 2:2 says: “I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance”. Were they
120 good in their religious life? They walked by faith. Well, it is difficult to find a church like
121 them. The Lord rebuked them as follows: “You have forsaken your first love”. Do you know
122 what their first love is? This means that I have redeemed you by means of the cross.
123 Therefore, you have a new life now. This is the first love. Is it Amen to you? They have
124 forsaken their first love. Why? When we live in the world, we will realize that everything
125 would not go according to our expectation. Our life does not go as expected. At that time, we
126 doubt. Are we redeemed? Are we children of God? What I want to say when we continue to
127 doubt is that we forsake our first love. At that moment Jesus was not silent, He asked again
128 and again: “Are you peaceful?” He is asking again here and now. In this respect, we should
129 answer: “Yes”, and kneel at His feet and say that I am peaceful because your life is within
130 me. If we do not react in this way, we can say that we have forsaken our first love. That is
131 why Jesus said, “I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. Repent and
132 do the thing you did at first.” What is the thing you did at first? We must be touched by

133 becoming children of God, and through the redemption of our lives we must say, “Yes,”
134 when Jesus asks, “Are you peaceful?” We must have this impression in the world. This is the
135 thing you did at first. Today Jesus asks: “Are you peaceful?” Let’s answer together. Amen!
136 Are you peaceful? Amen!

137
138 Secondly, Jesus said: “Do not be afraid!” It is difficult. This situation is really serious.
139 Something happened that I did not expect. Now one would be scared in this situation. It is a
140 frightening situation. Let’s consider the following, suddenly we encountered a great difficulty
141 in our home. There is a problem with our children. However, Jesus said: “Do not be afraid”
142 because the life of resurrection is within us.

143
144 The rich are afraid of losing their riches. The poor are afraid due to their poverty. Healthy
145 people are afraid of falling ill. Scholars are afraid because of their knowing. Ignorant people
146 are afraid because of their ignorance. This world can be a terrifying place for most people.

147
148 Every moment Jesus says to us, “Do not be afraid”. The life of Jesus Christ is within you.
149 Don’t be afraid. Let’s see Isaiah 43:1: “O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I
150 have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine”.” Someone who has the
151 life of Jesus Christ within them can overcome any difficult situation and give the glory to
152 God.

153
154 A few years ago, I went to Boston. In 1942, there was a devastating fire in Boston. Four
155 hundred and ninety-three people died as a result of this fire and 200 people were rescued.
156 After this fire, a research institution tracked the 200 people that were rescued. Their research
157 focused on the transition of their lives after this fire. After longitudinal research, it was found
158 that 85% of these individuals regained their faith. But they were not the same as they were
159 before.

160
161 That’s right! We do not need to be afraid of unexpected events because the life of the
162 resurrected Jesus is within us. Due to this life within us, we do not die permanently and
163 forever. We believe that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.
164 However, do you know how to react in a scary situation?

Revelation 3:1 says: “I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead”. What does this mean? It means that even though you have the life of Jesus in you, you are afraid of an unexpected scary situation. If you are also afraid of an unexpected scary situation in your life, you are the church in Sardis. In this respect, you are dead. You have the reputation of being alive. Dear brothers and sisters, you have the life of Jesus Christ in you. Say to the person next you: “You have the life of the resurrected Jesus”. Therefore, Jesus said: “Do not be afraid”.

Finally, Jesus said: “Go to Galilee”. Say together: “Go to Galilee”. Where should the resurrected Jesus go? Consider it. If I were resurrected from the dead, I would go to those who tormented me and killed me, and surprise and scare them. A few days ago, Jesus was troubled by many people, he suffered pain. What do you think of the resurrected Jesus appearing in front of those who persecuted him? How surprised the high priest will be. How frightened the Jews will be. How scared Pilate will be when Jesus comes and says to him: “Why did you do this?” If Jesus suddenly appeared before them, how will they feel about their deeds? It will be great. However, Jesus went to Galilee. Do you know why he went to Galilee?

The reason is as follows. Let’s see Matthew 26:32: “But I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee”. He went to Galilee as he said to his disciples. What is the reason for going to Galilee?

Let’s look at Matthew 16:16-20. When I have risen from the dead, you should build up a church. The Lord went to Galilee to build up a church. That is why Jesus sent his disciples to the world. This is also our mission. What is a church? I am a church. Is it ‘Amen’ to you? Someone who has the life of the resurrected Jesus is a church. In this respect, I will be built up as a church. Jesus set his grace upon us; therefore, we are going to be a completed church. How do we complete it? Jesus said: “Go to Galilee”. When we go to Galilee, we will remember his words. When we remember his words, we can obey them little by little. My church will gradually expand. I will stand up as a church. The resurrected Jesus is building us up as a church now.

One person remarked: “Pastor, I do not know why I do not change well?” There is the

199 Duomo Cathedral in Milan. People from all over the world visit Milan to see this Cathedral.
200 The building of it commenced in 1382 and it was first completed in 1851 for the coronation
201 of Napoleon. Is it amazing? However, this Cathedral is being gradually built up now.

202

203 We will stand up as a church but this is not finished all at once. Little by little, we will be
204 changed and stand up as a church of Jesus. Do you agree with this? For this reason, Jesus
205 sends us to Galilee. On our way to Galilee, we will remember His words saying: “Are you
206 peaceful?” “Do not be afraid!” When we obey His words, we will build the so-called
207 church—you and me. Therefore, they are also a church next you. You have to encourage
208 them to build a church. Let’s compliment each other. Buttress them. You are so beautiful
209 when you pray and worship Him. Going to Galilee means that we are working together to
210 complete it. The life of the resurrection is within us. Jesus comes and asks us: “Are you
211 peaceful? Don’t be afraid!” Even the world is going to change dramatically. You, do not be
212 afraid of this, go to Galilee and build up a church. I hope you will be blessed when you listen
213 to His voice and live like a man who has the life of the resurrection. Let’s pray.

214

APPENDIX 3: SERMON OF CHURCH C

Date: 2016. 03. 27.

Title: They will see me there.

Text: Matthew 28:1-10

This is the era of the story of Jesus' resurrection. There is a woman who woke at dawn; this dawn is the most significant dawn in history because Jesus died on the cross. It was the first day after the Sabbath since Jesus died. A woman appeared; her name was Mary Magdalene. Dear brothers and sisters, Mary was converted from having the worst life to the best life of those in the Bible. She followed Jesus to the very end and was the first to meet the risen Jesus Christ. She is Mrs. Choi, which means the "superlative" in Korean.

When someone is possessed by a demon, the Bible says that he/she is possessed by an evil and dirty demon. She was possessed by seven demons; as a result she suffered much pain. She was the dirtiest woman in history, but her life was changed because of Jesus Christ. After meeting with Jesus Christ, she became the most pure woman. Jesus cast the seven demons out of her. She was converted from having the worst life to the best life. The disciples of Jesus were not loyal and fled when Jesus was taken to the cross. But she was not like them; she followed Him with much loyalty. In today's biblical texts, she was the first woman to meet the resurrected Jesus Christ. From the worst life to the best life and from the beginning to the end, she is really Mrs. Choi and also the main heroine in this story.

People say that 'the early bird freezes to death'. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb at dawn because of Jesus Christ. She was with Him until His death and then went to look for the resurrected Jesus Christ. People gravitate towards what they like and have an interest in. Mary's interest was in Jesus Christ. She went to the tomb because she was interested in how His body was.

Let's look at verse two: "Suddenly there was a great earthquake, because an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled aside the stone and sat on it". When I went to Europe, I saw that there were only pillars, that there were no beautiful and magnificent buildings. So I took a picture of the pillars. That was the tourist attraction. During the period between 500

34 years and 1000 years, there was the greatest earthquake in the world. There was nothing that
35 could withstand this earthquake when it shook the ground. Immediately, it became
36 uninhabitable. In the days of Noah, God judged people with water because of their sin. God
37 judged Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and sulphur fire. This era is similar to the days of
38 Noah, and Sodom and Gomorrah. In the Psalms, it is not a matter of how well men watch
39 their castle, because if God is not watching it for them, their efforts are useless. There was a
40 great earthquake. God manages birth, old age, sickness, death, fortune and misfortune,
41 happiness and misery, joy and anger, sorrow and pleasure. He organized these things
42 according to people's faith, as they dream, as they plant, and as they wish.

43
44 Jesus passed away, an earthquake occurred, and an angel came down from heaven. In verse
45 three, we read that "...his face shone like lighting, and his clothing was as white as snow".
46 They were very frightened, but were filled with great joy after hearing the news from the
47 angels. After listening to the voice of the angels, after seeing the resurrected Jesus, their
48 hearts were on fire. The glory of Jesus Christ and the angels shone like lightning when they
49 saw them. Dear brothers and sisters, when Stephen was stoned to death, he saw the glory of
50 Jesus Christ, who stood in the place of honour at God's right hand. That is why he never
51 wavered when he was martyred. When we see the glory of the resurrected Lord, we can also
52 live like a brave Christian. When the prophet Isaiah saw the glory of God, his life was
53 changed. This Sunday morning, if we see the glory of the resurrected Jesus Christ, our lives
54 will also be changed.

55
56 This morning, someone gave their firstfruits to God. These firstfruits have a complicated
57 story. Someone has a son who became a doctor after eighteen years. She went through many
58 hardships as a mother. She spent money for him equivalent to the cost of a few houses. Her
59 son tried to kill himself. When she prayed for her son, she saw Jesus, who came to her as a
60 bright light. After she experienced this, her son passed an examination to become a doctor.
61 Therefore, she gave the firstfruits to God. Consider how impressed she is? For decades she
62 prayed for her son, and the Lord saw her tears and heard her prayers. After she saw the glory
63 of Jesus Christ, she was sure that her son would soon become a doctor.

64
65 Dear brothers and sisters, the angel from heaven appeared to Mary, their face shone like light,
66 and their clothing was as white as snow. Mary was very frightened but she was filled with

great joy. Therefore, when we hear the Word of God, when we praise the Lord, when we live by faith, we have to see the glory of God.

There is a Bible verse in the Deokcheon Church: “Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40:34). The church is the place to stay for the glory of God. After meeting Jesus and the angels, her heart was filled with fear but also great joy, and she began to run. When we look carefully in the Bible, anyone who meets Jesus Christ responds quickly.

In verse seven, the women are told to “go quickly and tell his disciples”, and in verse eight, they ran quickly from the tomb. When we look back at the people Jesus used, they were very diligent. Look at Abraham after God said that he would leave the house early in the morning. Look at the story of Abraham, when he entertained angels with a meal. Abraham quickly went to fetch a calf to cook. Look at the parable of the talents. The good servants were diligent, but the wicked servant was lazy. When the Holy Spirit gives us the impression, when we hear the voice of Jesus, we cannot help but move quickly. The woman quickly ran from the tomb to tell the disciples what happened. It is like the words of Isaiah in chapter 40: “They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint”. Mary saw the angels and heard their voice. There was a ringing and trembling in her heart. That is why she ran quickly.

The angels told her not to be afraid. Jesus also told her not to be afraid. He greeted her: “Are you peaceful?” The first words of the resurrected Jesus to his disciples were: “Peace be with you”. This peace is *shalom*. It does not mean that there is no fight. *Shalom* implies the following meanings: Paul’s freedom after being trapped, the glory of God that Isaiah saw, the endless love that Hosea experienced, God’s justice that Amos proclaimed. *Shalom* is a state of peace that is combined with these things. Jesus can only give us the peace of God because He conquered the power of death. In this respect, He said: “Peace be with you”.

When Mary and his disciples were overwhelmed by the glory of God, the peace of God overflowed from their hearts; it cannot be like nothing happened to them. Therefore, they ran and moved immediately. Was it not hard for Mary to be possessed by seven demons? Depression takes away morale and appetite. Mary was lethargic, she had no appetite, and she could not sleep well for a long period of time. After meeting Jesus, her heart quickened,

100 beating again with great joy. She became a lovely woman; her heart was filled with
101 inexpressible joy, the peace of God overflowed from her heart. In this respect, she hastened
102 with the angel's message.

103
104 In more recent years, we are all living under a collective depression because of chronic
105 fatigue, lethargy, and the bad news of Christians. The Lord speaks to us: "Do not be afraid!
106 Do not be surprised! Be brave! I will give peace unto you". Listen to the words of Jesus
107 Christ. Be brave. Keep the peace of Jesus. We can rise above the power of death and
108 darkness.

109
110 In the Old Testament, Elijah met God in the midst of severe depression while suffering from a
111 panic disorder. When Elijah heard the soft voice of God, he was healed. After meeting the
112 living God, he no longer got tired, and ran in front of Ahab's golden chariot despite being
113 bare foot. He became a very enthusiastic person. We are all Jesus' followers; he is our risen
114 Lord. I hope that we will all live in His peace. Because of the peace of Jesus Christ in our
115 heart we are able to live with exceeding joy as the women, without the smell of death and
116 darkness. In this sense, we are not afraid and we can go ahead with a brave heart. We can
117 move quickly.

118
119 How many Christians get tired of living? How many Christians feel lethargic? Jesus comes
120 and speaks to them today: "Don't be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they
121 will see me there". The angels said the same thing. Do not look for the risen Lord at the
122 tomb, because the tomb cannot capture the resurrected Jesus Christ. Why are you looking
123 here for Jesus Christ? He is alive again. Go to Galilee. You will see Him there.

124
125 Why Galilee? Galilee is not a city. There is no department store there. Galilee is located in
126 the countryside. He demonstrated that message through his life: "Do not go downtown". It
127 means that you should go to poor people such as tax collectors, prostitutes, widows, and
128 orphans. Jesus said, let's meet at Galilee. This is such a great grace for me. Jesus Christ
129 ministered in Galilee and in Nazareth, rather than Jerusalem. He called his disciples to go to
130 the countryside rather than downtown. He went to the lowest place, rather than the highest
131 place. People would like to find a comfortable place and a good place. Our risen Lord went to
132 Galilee rather than the centre of Jerusalem, and said: "You will see me there".

Our lives are like that. We also look around for a good place and a comfortable place. We wish that nothing will happen to us. Therefore, we become spiritually incapacitated. We lose our passion because we are loath to go to Galilee. According to my experience, I would also like to go to Jerusalem rather than Galilee. I would like to go to a good and comfortable place. God called Moses into the wilderness to train him. God called Abraham to the uncomfortable place to train him. God called them into the wilderness and inspired their wild nature. Contemporary Christians have lost their wild nature because they turn their face away from Galilee. The centre of Jesus Christ's ministry was not Jerusalem. He was in Galilee when he called his disciples.

Political activists like this song: "The red sun is rising over the cemetery. Now I am going to the harsh wilderness. Throw away my sorrow into the harsh wilderness, I am going now".

You may think I am strange because I sing this song. However, this song is similar to today's biblical texts. Jesus could not be trapped in the tomb. He was not in the tomb because He was resurrected. He went to Galilee and said that you will see me there. The Christian life is not a comfortable one. We should not only live hopping for success. Keep making money and helping other people. Learn to serve others. To meet the risen Lord, we should not go to Jerusalem. The risen Lord went to Galilee where the poor, orphans, widows, tax collectors and prostitutes are. We will not find Jesus Christ in the tomb. He is not in a luxury place downtown. We should head to Galilee and the wilderness.

There is a pastor who has been on pilgrimage 28 times. I asked him: "Since you have been on pilgrimage, where would you like to visit again?" He replied that he would like to go to the wilderness.

What is the wilderness? There is nothing in the wilderness. It is like an empty land, a sand floor. Why does he want to go to the wilderness? When we go to a luxury place downtown we are in a daze. (A song: Everything that I had allowed to rule my life. I lay them down and come before you. We should look to the Lord.) After we have received His grace, we cannot expect to have anything more. We have to surrender; we have to go to Galilee and into the wilderness. There we will find the Lord. He did not stay at the mountain of Transfiguration. He came down from the mountain to the world. He entered the troubled world and came to

the sick people in the midst of conflict and battle. The risen Lord said: “You will see me there”.

Dear, brothers and sisters. This woman was converted from the worst life to the best life. She is the woman who followed Jesus Christ to His death and was the first to meet the resurrected Jesus. She is a woman with a sense of loyalty. When she lived her life like someone who had lost all motivation, enslaved by seven demons, suffering from a deep depression, Jesus Christ called her name and said: “Don’t be afraid and be brave”. He gave his *Shalom* to Mary, shattering the powers of darkness. This *Shalom* is the peace that only Jesus can give us. Thereby, she overcame her deep depression and ran quickly, following his instructions. Is she so beautiful? Who can stop her beating heart given by the glory of the Lord? Who can sever us from the love of God? Mary Magdalene lived as one who had experienced the most rapid change in the Bible. Jesus called them from Jerusalem to Galilee. In recent years, we seek a good thing, a comfortable place, and the pursuit of pleasure. Where is our Galilee? We have to go to our Galilee where we can meet Jesus Christ. We have to stare at the risen Lord quietly. When we meet Jesus Christ there, we are successful people, winners, and happy people.

This is what it means to go to Galilee. This is what it means to go to the wilderness. This is what it means to go to the empty field. When we hear this, our hearts should be filled with excitement. The purpose of our lives is not to eat well and to live well. Jesus did not call us to that place. He called us to come to Galilee, which is the place of his first love, and the field of ministry.

The purpose of my life should not be to make sure that I am well and my children are well. If you are knowledgeable, have good health and more money, you should be a giver and a server, and you should go to Galilee.

Youngchang Jeon, the principal of Geochang High School, returned to South Korea and established a high school there when everyone fled abroad because of the Korean War. He gave ten lessons to graduates. For example, they should seek difficult situations rather than comfortable places. You should go where you will receive a small salary. When you do get a job, go to a place that your wife and mother-in-law does not like. Thus, many leaders came

199 from there.

200

201 The resurrected Jesus Christ did not call his disciples to a luxurious place in the centre of
 202 Jerusalem. He did not say: “Let’s eat together and take a rest”. Jesus called them to Galilee
 203 and he awakened their mission. He instilled great joy in their hearts. Therefore, they were
 204 alive again. We too must live again. We can overcome our deep depression and rise again.
 205 When the resurrection of Jesus Christ becomes our resurrection, we will have the courage to
 206 take on our mission. We are not strong enough to deal with our mission on our own, but He
 207 will give us power. He will anoint us with the Holy Spirit. We have to go to our wilderness.
 208 We have to go to our own Galilee. Please visit Galilee again. My wish is that you will sing a
 209 song of victory with Jesus Christ. You must live like that. I bless you in the name of the Lord.

210

211

APPENDIX 4: SERMON OF CHURCH D

Date: 2016. 03. 27.

Title: The great morning.

Text: Luke 24:1-12

Hallelujah! Let's start by greeting those next to you. "The Lord resurrected". I hope that the joy and grace of the resurrected Jesus will be with you and form the foundation of your life.

I am going to share the Word of God from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 24. Luke chapter 24 can be divided into two parts. Verse 1 to 12 is about what happened in the early morning. Verse 13 to the end of the chapter concerns what happened in the afternoon. Verse 1 begins with "very early on Sunday morning". The Sabbath is Saturday, and the first day after the Sabbath is Sunday. Sunday is important because it is the day the Lord rose from the dead.

What time was it? It said: "Very early on Sunday morning". You might know that an early morning has a number of times. For example, our church has two early morning worship services. The first time is 5:00 AM, and the second time is 6:30 AM. At 5:00 AM it is still dark, whereas at 6:30 AM it is already light.

The translation does not reveal what time it was. However, the closest translation indicates that it was dawn, which is still dark. The women were going somewhere in a hurry. Where did they go? They were on their way to the tomb with spices. They did not seem to be frightened. At dawn they rushed toward the cemetery, it was still dark. In this sense, the women are braver than the men.

They went the day before to the tomb. Let's see chapter 23, from verse 55 to 56: "The women from Galilee followed and saw the tomb where they placed his body. Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to embalm him." They prepared spices and ointments. What does this mean? Did they believe in the resurrected Jesus? Or did they not believe? They did not believe. They went to the tomb because they loved him, they followed him, and they trusted him. For this reason they went to complete the funeral arrangements.

34 There is one thing Luke omitted. Let's see the Gospel of Mark 16:3: "As they asked each
35 other, who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" What does this mean?
36 They did not have any countermeasure or plans in place. They made their way to the tomb
37 without a plan. Paradoxically, God uses people like them who have no countermeasure. I do
38 not mean that having no countermeasure is right. They knew that a stone blocked the entrance
39 to the tomb. It was early morning; no one accompanied them. They approached the tomb, a
40 bit apprehensive at the same time. The stone was too heavy for a few men to move.

41
42 Why was the gate of the tomb blocked? Let's see the Gospel of Matthew 27:66. "So they
43 went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard". You
44 may know what this story is about. When Jesus died, they held an emergency meeting. They
45 were afraid of the body of Jesus Christ disappearing because when Jesus was alive he
46 foretold of his death and resurrection. If his disciples hid the body of Jesus Christ there would
47 have been greater turmoil. There were soldiers who watched the tomb, so no one could enter
48 or remove the body of Christ. That is why they put a seal on the tomb. The women went to
49 the tomb without any plan.

50
51 When they arrived at the tomb, the stone had been removed. According to the Gospel of
52 Matthew, the angels rolled the stone away. They went in but they could not find the body of
53 Jesus Christ. If you were a regular Christian how would you react in this situation? We may
54 shout Hallelujah and dance with great joy because he was resurrected like he said. They were
55 concerned about the empty tomb. In another Gospel, they were afraid of the empty tomb
56 because he was not there. They did not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. The angels
57 said: "He is not here. He has risen from the dead."

58
59 Have you ever thought like that? Why did nobody see Jesus Christ when he walked out of the
60 tomb? We can think like that. Why did Jesus rise from the dead in the early morning rather
61 than at noon? How much better would it have been if he rose from the dead at noon? Many
62 people would have seen the risen Jesus Christ. This would have proved his resurrection.
63 There was no one who saw him when he left the tomb.

64
65 When someone dies, the Bible says he/she is sleeping. Therefore, when we go to bed to sleep,
66 it is the same as practising to die. In turn, in the morning, we practice resurrection. Every day

we sleep and wake. We practice death and resurrection in our daily lives. In the early morning, the whole world was sleeping quietly. At that time, the Lord of the world and the Lord of life conquered the power of death, rose from the dead and walked out of the tomb. He wants to give us life. No one saw that happening, the incident of the risen Jesus Christ was not transmuted. It means the news of the resurrected Jesus is to be preserved. This is evident of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Let's assume that a few people saw Him rising from the dead and walking out of the tomb. They will subjectively record the event because they are mere human beings who are sinners. This would have resulted in the springing up of a lot of denominations, such as the denomination of getting up gently or standing up suddenly. Each would have fought to assert their own opinion.

What is the message of this story of the women who went to the tomb? What is the important message from today's biblical texts? It can be titled: "The unbelief of the believer". They understood the resurrection as a ticket because it was to take place in the future, not during their time. Jesus usually spoke about his death and resurrection, but his disciples understood it as a ticket to enter into heaven when they die. Their understanding of the resurrection is incomplete because it had no relevance for them in their day and reality.

For example, let's look at the following well-known story. Jesus is very fond of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Lazarus died. His body was rotten and smelling. But Jesus said he would live. Martha replied, she knew he would be alive in the last day. She believed the resurrection. She knew it would happen. But the resurrection she believes is incomplete. She did not believe that her brother would be alive here and now. This demonstrates the misunderstanding of the resurrection.

How do you understand the resurrection? What is the meaning of Easter Sunday for you? What power does Easter have for you? Does the resurrection of Jesus Christ become a foundation of power and hope in the suffering of your life? Or do you understand the resurrection like Martha did? Paul said in Philippians, resurrection is power. The power of resurrection. Why the resurrection is power? It means that resurrection is not only for the end at judgment day. The grace of the resurrection will be my power during the time I live in this

100 troubled world and in suffering.

101

102 Mary Magdalene was anxious when she found the tomb empty. The body of Jesus was
103 nowhere to be found when she went there with the spices. Why is there a gap between our
104 faith and our reality? We hear, and learn, and know the way to live faithfully but our life is
105 different from how it should be. Why does this happen? We can find an answer in the words
106 of the angels.

107

108 Let's see verse 6. "He isn't here! He has risen from the dead! Don't you remember what he
109 told you back in Galilee?" What did the angels tell her that reminded her? "Remember what
110 he told you back in Galilee". The problem is forgetting the words of Jesus. The gap between
111 our faith and our life is the result of separating the Word of God from the reality of life. This
112 is the most difficult problem in a Christian's life. The problem is that the Word of God has
113 not become the power of our life.

114

115 The angels told her to remember the words of Jesus Christ. Let's see verse 7: "That the Son
116 of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise
117 again on the third day" This is the important teaching concerning His life. He taught them
118 that He would die on the cross and rise again from the dead. They could not remember what
119 He said. In verse 8: "Then they remembered..." The women remembered the words of Jesus
120 Christ and they ran and told it to His disciples.

121

122 In verse 11: "They didn't believe it..." They did not believe the news of the risen Lord. It was
123 like a nonsense story to them. They thought those women were out of their mind. What type
124 of men are the apostles? Jesus fed them, went everywhere with them, taught them the Word,
125 lived among them and they enjoyed being together for three years. Despite all of that, they
126 did not believe.

127

128 Jesus did not just live on his own authority. He lived according to certain principles. Let's see
129 First Corinthians 15:3: "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that
130 Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures". Verse 4: "That he was buried, that he
131 was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures". He lived according to the Scriptures
132 in order to accomplish the Scriptures.

133

134 However, the problem of the recent church is that they walk along a different path; learning
 135 the Word of God but living without the Word of God. It means that the Word of God does not
 136 feature in our lives. The great issue of the resurrected Jesus did not have any meaning in our
 137 lives. When we forgot the Word of God, we are nothing.

138

139 After the death of Jesus Christ, few people went to their hometown. Two of Jesus' followers
 140 were walking to the village of Emmaus. Jesus was walking beside them, but they didn't know
 141 who he was. The risen Lord who put on a new body initiated a conversation with them. What
 142 was the conversation about? Verse 21: "But we had hoped that he was the one who was going
 143 to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. Let's see verse
 144 25: "He [Jesus] said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that
 145 the prophets have spoken!"⁴⁴ Jesus explained the Word of God to them, as they slowly
 146 believed the words of the prophets. How did they react to the words of Jesus Christ? Verse
 147 32: "They asked each other, were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on
 148 the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

149

150 When did their hearts burn? When He opened up and explained the Scriptures to them. The
 151 Word of God was given to them; it was revealed to them, their reasoning and their
 152 intelligence, and their hearts burned. At that time they began to realize the cross of Jesus
 153 Christ—his death and his sufferings. It happened when Jesus revealed the Scriptures. Let's
 154 see verse 44: "He said to them, this is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything
 155 must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."
 156 Verse 46: "He told them, this is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead
 157 on the third day". Hallelujah! The risen Lord opened up and explained the Scriptures to the
 158 disciples who were frustrated. What is with their memory? It has to do with the Scriptures.
 159 When they are distant from the Scriptures, they cannot understand His suffering and
 160 resurrection, and they lose their power. Christianity does not give power to them.

161

162 How about you? Let's take a look at the witnesses of the empty tomb; the last witness. The
 163 apostles did not believe the women when they said the tomb was empty and the Lord was
 164 risen. Two of the apostles ran to the tomb. Let's see verse 12: "Peter, however, got up and ran
 165 to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away,

wondering to himself what had happened”. Luke did not mention the other man who was with Peter. John was there too. They ran together. John arrived at the tomb first, then Peter. Therefore, Peter was the last witness of the empty tomb.

Why did John arrive there first? He was younger than Peter; Peter was older than John. That is why he arrived there after John.

A surprising fact is that Peter’s life began to change after seeing the risen Lord. He did not believe at the cross, but his life changed when he met the risen Lord; it was turned upside down.

He opened the door of mission to the Gentiles. Most know that Paul opened the gate of mission to the Gentiles, but Peter initiated it. Who went to Cornelius the Gentile centurion? It was Peter who went to Cornelius. He was hesitant to go there at first. One day an angel of the Lord came to him and said, “Why do you think these are dirty which I have cleaned?” This refers to preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. When he went to Cornelius, he was surprised because they accepted Jesus and was anointed by the Holy Spirit. He opened the gate for the Gentiles.

In Acts chapter 3, Peter went to the temple for a prayer service and saw a crippled beggar at the gate called Beautiful. Some people were carrying a man who was lame from birth to the gate. He was like that his whole life. When he asked them for some money, Peter replied: “I don’t have any money for you. But I’ll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk.” After that, Peter preached the gospel and about three thousand men who heard his message believed.

His sermon can be summarized as follows: You killed the Lord of life instead of a murderer. You failed to act rightly. However, God raised him from the dead. This was Peter’s message after healing the crippled beggar.

His sermon was about Jesus’ death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead. He confessed that he was a witness of this. Then the religious leaders oppressed them. They told them “...never again to speak or teach about Jesus”. Peter who used to be cowardly

199 confessed bravely, “We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and
200 heard”. Hallelujah! This reflects the change in Peter who was cowardly. What caused Peter to
201 change? The resurrected Jesus.

202
203 There will be a change when the resurrection of Jesus Christ comes into the life of someone.
204 It must happen. If we exit through the gate of our worship place normally, at least we should
205 be a witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we would like to preach the news
206 of the blessed resurrection to the dark world and to those who have not yet heard, do you hear
207 this? Jesus Christ was resurrected. Do you know Jesus Christ? He died on the cross for our
208 sins. We have received the forgiveness of our sins because of Jesus Christ. Because of Jesus
209 Christ, freedom has come upon us. Do you know Him? This is the day of his resurrection. We
210 should become a witness of His resurrection; as a messenger. We should not be ignorant
211 because of the great joy of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the unchangeable excitement
212 of the risen Lord; you will rise again with great courage and believe in the world. I bless you;
213 this will be the foundation of your faith. Amen.

214
215 Let’s sing the hymn in chapter 162, ‘I serve a risen Saviour’.

216
217 Let’s pray together. Our Lord, please let the power of the resurrection become our strength
218 and reality in our lives. Our tears, suffering and difficulties will dissipate through the power
219 of His resurrection. Please help us to become a witness and messenger of the resurrection.
220 Please guide our church to become a witness of the risen Lord and obey him. The resurrected
221 life of Jesus will be widespread until the end of the world. Let’s pray together.